THE LORDS OF HIGH DECISION

MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Use as Contag Novel

Howard M Judd

4 -28
29
6 43 drunkard but —
8 45 — go back
-6
26

66
132

177 etc
184
188-190
192
195
295

150 etc
155 etc
160 etc
165 168 170

226
348
349
398
429
451

THE LORDS OF HIGH DECISION

OTHER BOOKS BY
MEREDITH NICHOLSON

The Main Chance
Zelda Dameron
The House of a Thousand Candles
Poems
The Port of Missing Men
Rosalind at Red Gate
The Little Brown Jug at Kildare
The Hoosiers
(Historical. In National Studies in American Letters)

JEAN MORLEY

The Lords of High Decision

By
MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Illustrated by
ARTHUR I. KELLER

New York
Doubleday, Page & Company
1909

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THAT OF TRANSLATION
INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES, INCLUDING THE SCANDINAVIAN

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
PUBLISHED, OCTOBER, 1909

TO BOWMAN ELDER AND EDWARD ROBINETTE
IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR CANOE FLIGHT THROUGH THE
MAINE WOODS, WITH A BACKWARD GLANCE
AT INDIAN JOE
WHO FAILED TO FIND THE MOOSE

Mackinac Island,
September 20, 1909.

And the Fourth Kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken.

The Book of Daniel.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Face in the Locket	3
II.	The Lady of Difficult Occasions	21
III.	A Letter, a Bottle and an Old Friend	28
IV.	The Ways of Wayne Craighill	42
V.	A Child of the Iron City	59
VI.	Before a Portrait by Sargent	73
VII.	Wayne Counsels his Sister	86
VIII.	The Coming of Mrs. Craighill	101
IX.	"Help Me to be a Good Woman"	114
X.	Mr. Walsh Meets Mrs. Craighill	126
XI.	Paddock Delivers an Invitation	144
XII.	The Shadows Against the Flame	155
XIII.	Jean Morley	160
XIV.	A Light Supper for Two	175
XV.	Mrs. Blair is Displeased	190
XVI.	The Trip to Boston	206
XVII.	Mrs. Craighill Bides at Home	224
XVIII.	The Snow-storm at Rosedale	240
XIX.	Mr. Wingfield Calls on Mr. Walsh	262
XX.	Evening at the Craighills'	274
XXI.	Soundings in Deep Waters	292
XXII.	A Conference at the Allequippa	299
XXIII.	The End of a Sleigh-ride	307

THE LORDS OF HIGH DECISION

The Lords of High Decision

CHAPTER I

THE FACE IN THE LOCKET

AS Mrs. John McCandless Blair entered the house her brother, Wayne Craighill, met her in the hall. The clock on the stair landing was striking seven.

"On time, Fanny? How did it ever happen?" he demanded as she caught his hands and peered into his face. He blinked under her scrutiny; she always gave him this sharp glance when they met, — and its significance was not wasted on him; but she was satisfied and kissed him, and then, as he took her wrap:

"For heaven's sake what's up, Wayne? Father was ominously solemn in telephoning me to come over. John's dining at the Club — I think father wants to see us alone."

"It rather looks that way, Fanny," replied Wayne, laughing at his sister's earnestness.

"Well, is he going to do it at last?"

"There's no use kicking if he is, so be prepared for the worst."

"Well, if it's that Baltimore woman ——"

"Or that Philadelphia woman, or the person he met in Berlin — the one from nowhere ——"

Their voices had reached Colonel Craighill and he came into the hall and greeted his daughter affectionately.

"Give me credit, papa! I was on time to-night!"

"We will give John credit for sending you. How's the new car working?"

"Oh, more or less the usual way!"

Dinner was announced and they went out at once, Mrs. Blair taking a place opposite her father at the round table, with Wayne between them.

Roger Craighill was an old citizen; it may be questioned whether he was not, by severe standards, the first citizen of Pittsburg. There were, to be sure, richer men, but his identification with the soberer past of the City of the Iron Heart — before the Greater City had planted its guidons as far as now along the rivers and over the hills — gave indubitable value and dignity to his name. He was interested in many philanthropies and reforms, and he had just returned from Washington where he had attended a conference of the American Reform Federation, of which he was a prominent and influential member. Colonel Craighill, like his son, dressed with care and followed the fashion, and to-night in his evening clothes his daughter thought him unusually handsome and distinguished. He had kept his figure, and his fine colouring had prompted Mr. Richard Wingfield, the cynic of the Allequippa Club, to bestow upon him the soubriquet of Rosy Roger, a pleasantry for which Wingfield had been censured by the

governors. But Colonel Craighill's fine height and his noble head with its crown of white hair, set him apart for admiration in any gathering. He walked a mile a day and otherwise safeguarded his health, which an eminent New York physician assured him once a year was perfect.

Roger Craighill was by all tests the most eligible widower in western Pennsylvania, and gossip had striven for years to marry him to any one of a dozen women imaginably his equals. When the local possibilities were exhausted attention shifted to women of becoming age and social standing in other cities — New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore — Colonel Craighill's frequent absences from home lending faint colour of truth to these speculations. His daughter, Mrs. John McCandless Blair, had often discussed the matter with her brother, but without resentment, save occasionally when some woman known to them and distasteful or particularly unsuitable from their standpoint was suggested. It was indicative of the difference in character and temperament between brother and sister that Wayne was more captious in his criticisms of the presumptive candidates for their mother's place in the old home than his sister. When, shortly after Mrs. Craighill's death, Wayne's dissolute habits became a town scandal there were many who said that things would have gone differently if his mother had lived; that Mrs. Craighill had understood Wayne, but that his father was wholly out of sympathy with him.

Mrs. John McCandless Blair was immensely aroused now by the suspicion that her father was about to bring home a second wife, and she steeled her heart against the unknown woman. She was not in the least abashed by her father, who never took her seriously. He began describing his visit to Washington, to cover the four courses of the family dinner that must be eaten before — with proper deliberation and the room freed of the waitress — he apprised his children of the particular purpose of this family gathering.

Colonel Craighill was a capital talker and he gave an intimate turn to his account of the Washington meeting, uttering the names of his distinguished associates in the Federation with frank pride in their acquaintance. A Southern bishop, far-famed as a story-teller, was a member and Colonel Craighill repeated several anecdotes with which the clergyman had enlivened the conferences. He quoted one or two periods from his own speech at the dinner, and paused for Mrs. Blair and Wayne to admire their aptness. With a nice sense of climax he mentioned last his invitation to luncheon at the White House, where there was only one other guest — a famous English statesman and man of letters.

"It was really quite *en famille*. My impression of the President was delightful; I confess that I had wholly misjudged him. He addressed many questions to me directly — asking about political conditions here at home in such a way that I had

to do a good deal of talking. As I was leaving he detained me a moment and asked my opinion of the business outlook. I was amazed to see how familiar he appeared to be with the range of my own interests. He told me that if I had suggestions at any time as to financial policies he wished I would come down and talk to him personally. But the published reports of my visit to the White House annoyed me greatly. I thought it only just to myself to write him a line to repudiate the interview attributed to me. There have, of course, been rumours of cabinet changes, but I don't want office — all I ask is to be of some service to my fellow-men in the rôle of a private citizen."

Mrs. Blair murmured sympathetic responses through this recital. Wayne ate his salad in silence. He knew that his father enjoyed nothing so much as these conferences in behalf of good causes; they required a great deal of time, but Colonel Craighill had reached an age at which he could afford to indulge himself. If he enjoyed delivering addresses and making after-dinner speeches it was none of Wayne's affair. Their natures were antipodal. Wayne cared little what his father did, one way or another.

Mrs. Blair fell to chaffing her father about the work of the Federation. Her curiosity as to the nature of the announcement he had said he wished to make grew more acute as the minutes passed, and she talked with rather more than her usual nervous volubility.

"Just think," she exclaimed, "of drinking champagne over the building of schools for poor negroes! If you would send them the champagne how much more sensible it would be! There's a beautiful idea Why not found a society for providing free champagne for the poor and needy!"

"It's not for you to deride, Fanny. Only a little while ago you were raising a fund for the restoration of a Buddhist temple somewhere in darkest Japan — the merest fad. I remember that Doctor McAllister wrote me a letter expressing surprise that a daughter of mine should be aiding a heathen enterprise."

"It *was* too bad, papa! But the temple is all restored now, and we had a little fund left over after the work was done — I was treasurer and didn't know what else to do with it — so I gave it to help build an Episcopal parish house at Ironstead. And to-day I was out there in the machine and behold! Jimmy Paddock is running that parish house and a mission and is no end of a power in the place."

"Paddock? What Paddock?" asked Wayne.

"Why, Jimmy Paddock. Don't you remember him? You knew him in your prep. school, and he was on the eleven at Harvard while you were at the 'Tech.'"

"Not the same man," declared Wayne. "I knew my Jimmy like a top; he was no monk — not by a long shot. Besides, his family had money to burn. No parish house larks for Jim. He knew how to order a dinner!"

"It just happens," replied Mrs. Blair, "that I knew Jimmy, too, back in your college days and I declare that I saw him this afternoon at Ironstead. I was out there looking for a maid who used to work for us and I met Jimmy Paddock in the street — a very disagreeable street it was, too. You know he was always shy and he seemed terribly embarrassed. It was hard work getting anything out of him; but he's our old Jimmy and he's a regular minister — went off and did it all by himself and has been out there at Ironstead for six months — all through the hot weather."

"Does he wear a becoming habit and hold quiet days for women?" asked Wayne. "I remember that you affected the Episcopalians for a while — for about half of one Lent! That was just before those table-tippers buncoed you into introducing them to our first families."

"That is unworthy of you, Wayne!" and Mrs. Blair frowned at her brother with mock indignation. "Nobody ever really explained some of the things those mediums did. They certainly told *me* things —— !"

"I'll wager they did," laughed Wayne. "But go on about Jimmy."

"He's just a plain little minister — no habit or anything like that. He's wonderful with men and boys. He thanked me for helping with the parish house, and when candour compelled me to tell him that I didn't know it was his enterprise and that he had got what was left after restoring a Buddhist

temple, he smiled in just his old boyish way, and I made him get in the machine and take me to see the place, which is the simplest. There was a sign on the door of the parish house that said, 'Boxing Lessons Tuesday Night, by a Competent Instructor. All Welcome.' And it was signed 'J. Paddock, Rector.'"

"If this minister is the boy we knew when Wayne was at St. John's I should think he would have come to see us," remarked Colonel Craighill. "We used to meet his family now and then."

"I scolded him for not telling us he's here; and he said he had been too busy. He asked all about you, Wayne — said he was going to look you up; but when I asked him to come and dine with us he was so unhappy in trying to get out of it that I told him not to bother. He's perfectly devoted to his work, and they say the people out there are crazy about him."

"Dear old Jimmy!" mused Wayne. "I wonder how he's kept it so dark. You never can tell! Jimmy used to exhaust his chapel cuts the first week every term. If he's taken to saving souls, though, he'll do it; he hangs on like a bull pup. I can see him now at that last Thanksgiving game going down the field with the ball under his arm — he was as fast as lightning. I'd like to take a few boxing lessons from Jimmy myself, if he's in the business."

Coffee was served; Mrs. Blair dropped the Reverend James Paddock and watched her father choose his single lump of sugar. He refused a cigar but

waited until Wayne had lighted a cigarette before he dismissed the waitress and began.

"It must have occurred to you both that I might at some time marry again."

"Yes, father; I suppose that possibility has occurred to many people," replied his daughter, feeling that something was required at once. Wayne said nothing, but drew his chair back from the table and crossed his legs.

"I want you to understand that your dead mother's life is a precious — a very precious memory. My determination to marry means no disloyalty to her."

He bowed his head and drew one hand lightly across the table.

"I have been lonely at times; the management of the house in itself has been a burden, but I have not liked to give it up. I might have gone to live with you, Fanny, — you and John have been kind in urging me — but you have your own family; and as long as Wayne is unmarried the old place must be his home. The change I propose making will have no effect on your status in my house, Wayne — none whatever!"

"Thank you; I appreciate that, sir."

"In fact," continued Colonel Craighill, addressing his son, "you both understand that the house is really yours — I have only a life tenancy here — that was your mother's wish and she so made her will. Maybe you don't remember that this property was never mine. Your mother inherited a large

tract of land up here from her father, and after I built the house the title remained in her name — the homestead will be yours, Wayne; your mother made it up to Fanny in other ways."

"I understand — but wouldn't it be better for me to leave — for a time at least — after your marriage?"

"No; I couldn't think of that, and I'm sure Adelaide would be very uncomfortable if she felt you were being driven from home. And, moreover, you know how prone people are to gossip. It must not be said that my son left his father's house through any act of mine."

"The old story of the cruel stepmother!" smiled Wayne; but his father went on gravely, as though to rebuke this levity.

"There are ways in which you have been a great grief to me; I had not meant to speak of that, but Fanny has been a good sister to you and she knows the whole story. I should like you to remember — to remember that you are my son!"

Wayne nodded, but did not speak. After a moment his father resumed, addressing them both.

"I have known the lady I am to marry a comparatively short time, but I have become deeply attached to her. She is young, but that is not her fault" — and Colonel Craighill smiled — "or mine! Her father died when she was still a child, and she has lived abroad with her mother much of the time. She is of an old Vermont family. The marriage is to take place in a fortnight and by our own wish

will be altogether simple and quiet. Please do not mention this; I have to go to Cleveland to-morrow for a day or two and I shall make the announcement when I return. I have thought to save your feelings and to prevent embarrassment all round by not asking either of you to the ceremony. We shall meet in New York and go quietly to Doctor McAllister's residence — he is an old friend whom I have known long in church affairs — and we shall come home immediately. The name of the lady is Allen — Miss Adelaide Allen. I am sure you will learn to like her — that you and Fanny will see and appreciate the fine qualities in Miss Allen that have won my admiration and affection."

There was a moment's silence when he concluded. The candle nearest him sputtered and he adjusted it carefully. Then Mrs. Blair rose and kissed him.

"You sly old daddy!" she broke out; "and you never told a soul! Well" — and she seated herself again at the table and nibbled a bonbon — "tell us what she's like, and her ways and her manners. I suppose, of course, she's a teacher in one of your negro schools, or a foreign missionary or something noble like that! Tell us everything — everything ——" and Mrs. Blair, elbows on table, denoted the breadth of her demand by an outward sweep of her hands from the wrists.

Colonel Craighill smiled indulgently in the enjoyment of his daughter's eagerness.

"Tell us everything — her just being from Vermont doesn't mean much. Is she a blonde?"

"Well," replied Colonel Craighill, colouring slightly, "Now that I think of it, I believe she is!"

"I knew it!" exclaimed Mrs. Blair; "they're always blondes! What are her eyes?"

"Blue."

"Stout or thin?"

"I think her proportions are about right for her age."

"Which is —— ?"

"Twenty-nine."

"Are you sure about that, papa? You know they sometimes forget to count their birthdays."

"Whom do you mean by *they?*" asked Colonel Craighill guardedly.

"I mean the members of my delightful sex. Let me see, you are sixty-five, if I remember right. Twice twenty-nine is" — she made the computation on her slim, supple fingers — "fifty-eight: you're rather more than twice her age."

"It would be more polite, to say that she's rather less than half mine."

"Oh, it all gets to the same place! It will have the advantage of making me appear young to have a stepmother a few years my junior. But what a blow to these old dowagers who have been suspected of having designs on you! They little knew that all the time they were pursuing you to consult about their investments or church or charity schemes, you were casting about for some lovely young thing still in the lawful possession of her own hair and teeth. Why, if I'd known that was your idea there

are lots of nice girls here in town that I should love to have in the family. Wayne, you will be careful not to flirt with her!"

"Fanny!"

Colonel Craighill struck the table so sharply that the candlesticks jumped. He was angry, and the colour deepened in his face.

"Please, papa, — I didn't mean to be rude!"

Mrs. Blair touched her father's coat-sleeve lightly with her hand. She loved her brother very dearly, and the effect upon him of this marriage was already, in her vivid imagination, the chief thing in it. She had long felt that her father had given Wayne up; that he believed the passion for drink that took hold of his son at times was in the nature of a disease, to be suffered patiently and borne with Christian fortitude.

Wayne was vexed at his sister's manner; he disliked contention and there was nothing to he gained by being disagreeable over their father's marriage. He left the room to find fresh cigarettes and when he came back the air had cleared. Colonel Craighill, anxious on his part to be conciliatory, was laughing at a renewal of Fanny's cross-questioning.

"Where did Miss Allen attend school?" she was asking.

"I believe she had private teachers," replied Colonel Craighill, though not positively.

"And she isn't a teacher herself or a philanthropist? Has she money?"

"She and her mother are, I believe, in comfortable

circumstances. I hope that you and Wayne will appreciate the difficulties before this lady in becoming my wife — that she is stepping into a place where she will be criticized unkindly from the very fact of my position here and the disparity in our years and fortunes. I appeal to you, Fanny, as to one woman on behalf of another. You can make her way easy if you will."

He had, with the best intentions in the world, struck the wrong note. In so many words, he was asking mercy where there had been no accusation. Mrs. Blair had not the slightest intention of committing herself to any policy toward her father's new wife. So far as the public was concerned she would carry off the situation with outward acceptance and approval; but just now she declined to consider the question in the key her father had sounded. To him she was a frivolous person with unaccountably erratic ways, and with nothing of his own measure or sobriety. She made no reply whatever to his appeal, but chose another bonbon and ate it with exasperating slowness. Wayne saw — as her father did not — that she was angry; but Mrs. Blair fell back upon the half-mocking mood with which she had begun, demanding:

"Is she modish? Does she wear her clothes with an air?"

"I hope," said Colonel Craighill, betrayed into the least show of resentment by her refusal to meet his question — "I hope, Fanny, that she dresses like a lady."

"So do I, papa, if it comes to that! You haven't told us yet how you came to meet Miss Allen."

"It was last spring when I went to Bermuda. She and her mother were on the steamer. I saw a good deal of them then; and I have since seen them in New York, which is now really their home."

"Have they ever been here? — I have known Allens."

"I'm quite sure you have never met them, Fanny. Since Adelaide's father died they have travelled much of the time."

"So your frequent trips to New York haven't been wholly philanthropy and business! You speak her name as though you had got well used to it. It's funny, but I've never known Adelaides. Have you ever known an Adelaide, Wayne?"

"A lot of them; so have you if you will think of it," answered her brother. He saw that his father was growing restive and he knew that Fanny was going too far. There was a point at which she could vex those who loved her most, but being wiser than she seemed she usually knew it herself. She pushed away the bonbon dish and slapped her hands together lightly.

"Wayne," she cried, "what are we thinking of? We must see her picture! Now, papa! you know you have it in your pocket!"

"Certainly, we must see Miss Allen's picture," echoed Wayne, relieved at his sister's change of tone.

"Later — later!" but Colonel Craighill's annoyance passed and he smiled again.

"It isn't dignified in you to invite teasing, papa. You know you have her photograph. Out with it, please!"

She bent toward him as though threatening his pockets. He laughed, but coloured deeply; then he drew from his waistcoat a thin silver case a trifle larger than a silver dollar, and suffered Fanny to take it.

"Now," said Colonel Craighill, settling himself in his chair, "you see I am not afraid, Fanny, of even your severe judgment."

She weighed the unopened trinket in her palm as though taunting her curiosity. Wayne lighted a fresh cigarette and turned toward his sister. He was surprised at his own indifference; but he feigned curiosity to please his father, who naturally wished his children to be interested and pleased. Fanny opened the locket and studied it carefully for an instant.

"Charming! Perfectly charming!" she exclaimed; and then, holding it close and turning her head and pursing her lips as she studied the face, "but I thought you didn't like such fussy hair dressing — you always told me so. I don't like the ultra-marcelling; but it's well done — and if it's all hers and she can manage it without a rat she's a wonder. You've always decried the artificial, but I see you're finding that Nature has her weak points. Those eyes are just a trifle inscrutable, a little heavy-

lidded and dreamy — but we'll have to see the original. Her nose seems regular enough, and her mouth — well, I wouldn't trust any photograph to tell the truth about a mouth. She's young — my own lost youth smites me! Here, Wayne, behold her counterfeit presentment!"

Wayne inhaled a last deep draught of his cigarette and dropped it into the ash tray. He took the case into his fingers and bent over it, a slight smile on his lips.

"Be careful! Be careful!" ejaculated his sister. "This is a crucial moment."

Wayne's empty hand that lay on the table slowly opened and shut; the smile left his lips, but he continued to study the picture.

"Well, Wayne! Are you having so much trouble to make up your mind?" demanded Mrs. Blair, her keen sensibilities aroused by the fixedness of Wayne's stare at the likeness before him and the resulting interval of suspense. There was something here that she did not grasp, and she was a woman who resented being left in the dark. This interview with her father had been trying enough, but her brother's manner struck her ominously. Colonel Craighill smiled urbanely, undisturbed by his son's prolonged scrutiny of the face in the locket; he attached no great importance to Wayne's opinions on any subject. To Mrs. Blair, however, the silence became intolerable and she demanded:

"Are you hypnotized — or what has struck you, Wayne?"

"Nothing at all!" he laughed, closing the locket and handing it back. "I have no criticism — most certainly none. Father, I offer my congratulations."

And this happened midway of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seven.

CHAPTER II

THE LADY OF DIFFICULT OCCASIONS

THE Lady of Difficult Occasions — such was the title conferred upon Mrs. John McCandless Blair by Dick Wingfield — looked less than her thirty-two years. A slender, nervous woman, Mrs. Blair had contributed from early girlhood to the picturesqueness of life in her city. Her interests were many and varied; she did what she liked and was supremely indifferent to criticism. She wore colours that no other woman would have dared; for colour, she maintained, possesses the strongest psychical significance, and to keep in tune with things infinite one's wardrobe must reflect the rainbow. She had tried all extant religions and had revived a number long considered obsolete; her garret was a valhalla of discarded gods. One day the scent of joss-sticks clung to the draperies of her library, the next she dipped her finger boldly in the holy water font at the door of the Catholic cathedral and sent a subscription to the Little Sisters of the Poor.

She appeared fitfully in the Blair pew at Memorial Presbyterian Church, where her father was ruling elder and her husband passed the plate; and Memorial, we may say, was the most fashionable

house of prayer and worship in town, frowning dow severely upon the Allequippa Club over the way "Fanny Blair is sure of heaven," Dick Wingfiel said, "for she has tickets to all the gates." Mrs Blair was generous in her quixotic fashion; he husband had inherited wealth, and he was, more over, a successful lawyer, who admired her immensel and encouraged her foibles. She dressed her twi boys after portraits of the Stuart princes, and thei velvet and long curls caused many riots at the publi school they attended — sent there, she said, tha they might grow up strong in the democratic spiri

When they had adjourned to the library Mrs Blair spoke in practical ways of the new wife' home-coming. She tendered her own services i any changes her father wished in the house. Som of her mother's personal belongings she frankl stated her purpose to remove. They were thing that did not, to Colonel Craighill's masculine mind seem particularly interesting or valuable. Wayn grew restless as his father and sister considere these matters. He moved about idly, throwin in a word now and then when Mrs. Blair appeale to him directly. Evenings at home had becom unusual events, and domestic affairs bored hin Mrs. Blair was, however, sensitive to his mood and she continued her efforts to hold him withi the circle of their talk.

"Don't you think a reception — something larg and general — would be a good thing at the star Wayne?"

"Yes; oh, yes, by all means," he replied, looking up from a publisher's advertisement that he had been reading.

He left the room unnoticed a few minutes later and wandered into the wide hall, feeling the atmosphere of the house flow around him. It was the local custom, in our ready American fashion of conferring antiquity, to speak of the mansion as the old Craighill place. The house, built originally in the early seventies, had recently been remodelled and enlarged. It occupied half a block, and the grounds were beautifully kept, faithful to traditions of Mrs. Craighill's taste. The full force of the impending change in his father's life now struck Wayne for the first time. There is no eloquence like that of absence. He stood by the open drawing room door with his childhood and youth calling to all his senses. The thought of his mother stole across his memory — a gentle, bright, smiling spirit. The pictures on the walls; the familiar furniture; the broad fireplace; the tall bronze vases that guarded the glass doors of the conservatory, whose greenery showed at the end of the long room — those things cried to him now with a new appeal. A great bowl of yellow chrysanthemums, glowing in a far corner, struck upon his sight like flame. He walked the length of the room and gazed up at a portrait of his mother, painted in Paris by a famous artist. Its vitality had in some way vanished; the figure no longer seemed poised, ready to step down into the room. The luminous quality of the

face was gone; the eyes were not so brightly responsive as of old—he was so sure of these differences that he flashed off the frame lights with a half-conscious feeling that a shadow had fallen upon the spirit represented there, and that it was kinder to leave it in darkness.

His sister called him on some pretext—he was very dear to her and the fact that he and his father were so utterly unsympathetic increased her tenderness—and repeated the programme of entertainments which she had proposed.

"It's quite ample. There's never any question about your doing enough, Fanny," he remarked indifferently.

Colonel Craighill announced that he must go down to the Club to a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Greater City Improvement League, in which his son-in-law was interested.

"Wayne, you will take Fanny home in your own car, won't you? Or maybe you'll wait for John to stop?"

"I must go soon; Wayne will look after me," she said, and they both went to the door to see their father off.

"It's like old times," she sighed, as the motor moved away; "but those times won't come any more."

Then with a change of manner she turned upon Wayne and seized his hands.

"Wayne, have you ever seen that woman before?"

He shook himself free with a roughness that was unlike him.

"Don't be silly: of course not. I never heard of her. How did you get that idea?"

"You looked as though you were seeing a ghost when you looked at her picture."

"I was thinking of ghosts, Fanny, but I wasn't seeing one." He lighted a cigar. "I must say that your tact sometimes leaves you at fatal moments. The Colonel was almost at the point of getting mad. He wanted to be jollied — and you did all you could to irritate him."

"I had a perfect right to say what I pleased to him. How do you suppose he came to walk into this adventuress's trap? A girl of twenty-nine! The hunt will be up as soon as he makes the announcement and the whole town will join the pack."

"The town will have to stand it if we can."

"It's the loss of his own dignity, it's the affront to mother's memory — this young thing with her pretty marcelled head! There are some things that ought to be sacred in this world, and father ought to remember what our mother was — how noble and beautiful!"

"Well, we know it, Fanny; she's our memory now — not his," said Wayne gently; and upon this they were silent for a time, and Fanny wept softly. When Wayne spoke again it was in a different key.

"Well, father has his nerve to be getting married right on the verge of a panic. Perhaps he is doing it merely to reassure the public, to steady the market, so to speak."

"But papa says there will be no panic. The *Star* printed a long interview with him only yesterday. He says there must be a readjustment of values, that's all; he must be right about it."

"Bless you, yes, Fanny. If father says there won't be any panic, why, there won't! What does John say?"

"Well, John is always cautioning me about our expenses," she admitted ruefully, so that he laughed at her. "But great heavens, Wayne!" she exclaimed.

"Well, what's the matter now?"

"Why, he never told us a thing about her. Who do you suppose introduced him to her?"

"My dear Fanny," began Wayne, thrusting his long legs out at comfortable ease, "can you imagine our father dear being worked? He backed off and sparred for time when you wanted to marry John, though John belongs to our old Scotch-Irish Brahmin caste, because a Blair once owned a distillery back in the dark ages, and there was no telling but the sins of the rye juice might be visited on your children to the third and fourth generation if you married John. And if I had craved the Colonel's permission to marry some girl in another town — some girl, let us say, that *I* had met on a steamer going to Bermuda — you may be dead sure he would have put detectives on her family and had a careful assay made of her moral character. Trust the Colonel, Fanny, for caution in such matters! Don't you think for a minute that he

hasn't investigated Miss Adelaide Allen's family into its most obscure and inaccessible recesses! Our father was not born yesterday; our father is the great Colonel Roger Craighill, a prophet honoured even on his own Monongahela. Father never makes mistakes, Fanny. I'm his only mistake. I'm a great grief to father. He has frequently admitted it. He begs me please not to forget that I am his son. I am beyond any question a bad lot; I have raised no end of hell; I have frequently been drunk — beastly, fighting drunk. And father will go to his dear pastor and ask him to pray for me, and he will admit to old sympathizing friends that I'm an awful disappointment to him. That's the reason he stopped lecturing me long ago; he doesn't want me to keep sober; when I get drunk and smash bread wagons in the dewy dawn with my machine after a night among the ungodly he puts on his martyr's halo and asks his pastor to plead with God for me!"

"Wayne! Wayne! What's the matter with you?"

He had spoken rapidly and with a bitterness that utterly confounded her; and he laughed now mirthlessly.

"It's all right, Fanny. I'm a rotten bad lot. No wonder the Colonel has given me up; but I have the advantage of him there: I've given myself up! Yes, I've given myself up," he repeated, and nodded his head several times as though he found pleasure in the thought.

CHAPTER III

A LETTER, A BOTTLE AND AN OLD FRIEND

WHEN Wayne had taken Mrs. Blair to her own home and had promised on her doorstep to be "good" and to come to her house soon for a further discussion of family affairs, he told Joe, the chauffeur, that he wished to drive the machine, and was soon running toward town at maximum speed.

Joe, huddled in an old ulster, watched the car's flight with misgivings, for this mad race preluded one of Wayne's outbreaks; and Joe was no mere hireling, but a devoted slave who grieved when Wayne, as Joe put it, "scorched the toboggan."

Joe Denny's status at the Craighill house was not clearly defined. He lodged in the garage and appeared irregularly in the servants' dining room with the recognized chauffeur who drove the senior Craighill in his big car. It had been suggested in some quarters that Colonel Craighill employed Joe Denny to keep track of Wayne and to take care of him when he was tearing things loose; but this was not only untrue but unjust to Joe. Joe had been a coal miner before he became the "star" player of the Pennsylvania State League, and Wayne had marked his pitching one day while

killing time between trains at Altoona. His *sang froid* — an essential of the successful pitcher, and the ease with which he baffled the batters of the opposing nine, aroused Wayne's interest. Joe Denny enjoyed at this time a considerable reputation, his fame penetrating even to the discriminating circles of the National League, with the result that "scouts" had been sent to study his performances. When a fall from an omnibus interrupted Joe's professional career, Wayne, who had kept track of him, paid his hospital charges, and Joe thereupon moved his "glass" arm to Pittsburg. By shrewd observation he learned the management of a motor car, and attached himself without formality to the person of Wayne Craighill. For more than a year he had thus been half guardian, half protégé. Wayne's friends had learned to know him; they even sent for him on occasions to take Wayne home when he was getting beyond control; and Wayne himself had grown to depend upon the young fellow. It was something to have a follower whom one could abuse at will without having to apologize afterward. Besides, Joe was wise and keen. He knew all the inner workings of the Craighill household; he advised the Scotch gardener in matters pertaining to horticulture, to the infinite disgust of that person; he adorned the barn with portraits of leading ball players, cut from sporting supplements, and this gallery of famous men was a source of great irritation to Colonel Craighill's solemn German chauffeur, who had not

the slightest interest in, or acquaintance with, the American national game. Joe's fidelity to Wayne's interests was so unobtrusive and intelligent that Wayne himself was hardly conscious of it. Such items of news as the prospective arrival or departure of Colonel Craighill; the fact that he was trading his old machine for a new one; or that Walsh, Colonel Craighill's trusted lieutenant, had bought a new team of Kentucky roadsters for his daily drive in the park — or that John McCandless Blair, Wayne's brother-in-law, was threatened with a nomination for mayor on a Reform ticket — such items as these Joe collected through agencies of his own and imparted to Wayne for his better instruction.

To-night the lust for drink had laid hold upon Wayne and his rapid flight through the cool air sharpened the edge of his craving in every tingling, excited nerve. His body swayed over the wheel; he passed other vehicles by narrow margins that caused Joe to shudder; and policemen, looking after him, swore quietly and telephoned to headquarters that young Craighill was running wild again. He had started for the Allequippa Club, but, remembering that his father was there, changed his mind. The governors of the Penn, the most sedate and exclusive of the Greater City's clubs, had lately sent a polite threat of expulsion for an abuse of its privileges during a spree, and that door was shut in his face. The thought of this enraged him now as he spun through the narrow streets

in the business district. Very likely all the clubs in town would be closed against him before long. Then with increased speed he drove the car to the Craighill building, told Joe to wait, passed the watchman on duty at the door and ascended to the Craighill offices.

A lone book-keeper was at work, and Wayne spoke to him and passed on to his own room.

He turned on the lights and began pulling out the drawers of his desk, turning over their contents with a feverish haste that increased their disorder. Presently he found what he sought: a large envelope marked "Private, W. C." in his own hand. He slapped it on the desk to free it of dust, then tore it open and drew out a number of letters, addressed in a woman's hand to himself, and a photograph, which he held up and scrutinized with eyes that were disagreeably hard and bright. It was not the same photograph that his father had shown at the dinner table, but it represented another view of the same head — there was no doubt of that. He studied it carefully; it seemed, indeed, to exercise a spell upon him. He recalled what Mrs. Blair had said about the eyes; but in this picture they seemed to conspire with a smile on the girl's lips to tease and tantalize.

A number of letters that had been placed on his desk after he left the office caught his eye. One or two invitations to large social affairs he tossed into the waste-paper basket; he was only bidden now to the most general functions. He caught up an

envelope bearing the legend of a New York hotel and a typewritten superscription. He tore this open, still muttering his wrath at the discarded invitations, and then sat down and read eagerly a letter in a woman's irregular hand dated two days earlier:

"My dear Wayne:

"You wouldn't believe I could do it, and I am not sure of it yet myself; but I wanted to prepare you before *he* breaks the news. There's a whole lot to tell that I won't bore you with — for you do hate to be bored, you crazy boy. Wayne, I'm going to marry your father! Don't be angry — please! I know everything that you will think when you read this — but mama has driven me to it. She never forgave me for letting you go, and life with her has become intolerable. And please believe this, Wayne. I really respect and admire your father more than any man I have met, and can't you see what it will mean to me to get away from this hideous life I have been leading? Why, Wayne, I'd rather die than go on as we have lived all these years, knocking around the world and mama raising money to keep us going in ways I can't speak of. You know the whole story of *that.* I let mama think I am doing this to please her, but I am not. I am doing it to get away from her. I have made her promise to let me alone, and I will do all I can for her. She's going abroad right after my marriage and I hate to say it of my own mother, but I hope never to see her again.

"Of course you could probably stop the marriage by telling your father how near *we* came to hitting it off. I have always felt that you were unjust to

me in that — I really cared more for you than I knew — but that's all over now. That was another of mama's mistakes. She let her greed get the better of her and I suffered. But let us be good friends — shan't we? You know more about me than anybody, Wayne — how ignorant I am, and all that. Why, I had to study hard — mama suggested it, that's the kind of thing she *can* do — to learn to talk to your father about politics and philanthropy and those things. If anything should happen — if you should spoil it all, I don't know what mama would do; but it would be something unpleasant, be sure of that. She sold everything we had to follow your father about to those small, select places he loves so well.

"I am going to try to live up to your father's good name. I don't believe I'm bad. I'm just a kind of featherweight; and you will be nice to me, won't you, when I come? Your father has told me everything — about the old house and how it belongs to you. Of course you won't run away and leave me and you will help me to hit it off with your sister, too. He says she's a little difficult, but I know she must be interesting. As you see, I've taken mama's name by her second marriage since *our* little affair. Explanations had grown tiresome and mama enjoys playing to the refined sensibilities of those nice people who think three marriages are not quite respectable for one woman . . . "

He read on to the end, through more in the same strain. He flinched at the reference to the home and to his sister, but at the close he lighted a cigarette and re-read the whole calmly.

"It was your dear mother that caught the Colonel, Addie; you are pretty and you like clothes and you know how to wear them, but you haven't your dear mother's strategic mind. Oh, *you* were a sucker, Colonel, and they took you in! You are so satisfied with your own virtue, and you are so pained by my degradation! Let's see where you come out."

He continued to mutter to himself as he re-folded the letter. He grinned his appreciation of the care which had caused its author to avoid the placing of any tell-tale handwriting on the envelope. "I'm a bad, bad lot, Colonel, but there are traps my poor wandering feet have not stumbled into."

He glanced hurriedly at the packet of letters that he had found with the photograph and then thrust this latest letter in with the others and locked them all in a tin box he found in one of the drawers. When this had been disposed of he pulled the desk out from the wall and drew from a hidden cupboard in the back of it a quart bottle of whiskey and a glass. The sight of the liquor caused the craving of an hour before to seize upon him with renewed fury. He felt himself suddenly detached, alone, with nothing else in the world but himself and this bright fluid. It flashed and sparkled alluringly, causing all his senses to leap. At a gulp his blood would run with fire, and the little devils would begin to dance in his brain, and he could plan a thousand evil deeds that he was resolved to do. He was the Blotter, and a blotter was a worthless

thing to be used and tossed aside by every one as worthless. He would accept the world's low appraisement without question, but he would take vengeance in his own fashion. He grasped the bottle, filled the glass to the brim and was about to carry it to his lips when the clerk whom he had passed in the outer office knocked sharply, and, without waiting, flung open the door.

"Beg pardon, but here's a gentleman to see you, Mr Craighill."

With the glass half raised, Wayne turned impatiently to greet a short man who stood smiling at the door.

"Hello, Craighill!"

"Jimmy Paddock!" blurted Wayne.

The odour of whiskey was keen on the air and Wayne's hand shook with the eagerness of his appetite; but the fool of a clerk had surprised him at a singularly inopportune moment. He slowly lowered the glass to the desk, his eyes upon his caller, who paused on the threshold for an instant, then strode in with outstretched hand.

"That delightful chauffeur of yours told me you were here and I thought I wouldn't wait for a better chance to look you up. Had to come into town on an errand — was waiting for the trolley — recognized your man and here I am! Well!"

The glass was at last safe on the desk and Wayne, still dazed by the suddenness with which his thirst had been defrauded, turned his back upon it and greeted Paddock coldly. The Reverend James

Paddock had already taken a chair, with his face turned away from the bottle, and he plunged into lively talk to cover Craighill's embarrassment. They had not met for five years, and then it had been by mere chance in Boston, when they were both running for trains that carried one to the mountains and the other to the sea. Their ways had parted definitely when they left their preparatory school, Wayne to enter the "Tech," Paddock to go to Harvard. Wayne was not in the least pleased to see this old comrade of his youth: there was a wide gulf of time to bridge and Wayne shrank from the effort of flinging his memory across it. As Paddock unbuttoned his topcoat, Wayne noted the clerical collar — noted it, it must be confessed, with contempt. He remembered Paddock as a rather silent boy, but the young minister talked eagerly with infinite good spirits, chuckling now and then in a way that Wayne remembered. As his resentment of the intrusion passed, some reference to their old days at St. John's awakened his curiosity as to one or two of their classmates and certain of the masters, and Wayne began to take part in the talk.

Jimmy Paddock had been a homely boy, and the years had not improved his looks. His skin was very dark, and his hair black, but his eyes were a deep, unusual blue. A sad smile somehow emphasized the plainness of his clean-shaven face. He spoke with a curious rapidity, the words jumbling at times, and after trying vaguely to recall some

idiosyncrasy that had set the boy apart, Wayne remembered that Paddock had stammered, and this swift utterance with its occasional abrupt pauses was due to his method of conquering the difficulty. Behind the short, well-knit figure Wayne saw outlined the youngster who had been the wonder of the preparatory school football team for two years, and later at Harvard the hero of the 'Varsity eleven. There was no question of identification as to the physical man; but the boy he had known had led in the wildest mischief of the school. He distinctly recollected occasions on which Jimmy Paddock had been caned, in spite of the fact that he belonged to a New England family of wealth and social distinction. Paddock, with his chair tipped back and his hands thrust into his pockets, volunteered answers to some of the questions that were in Wayne's mind.

"You see, Craighill, when I got out of college my father wanted me to go into the law, but I tried the law school for about a month and it was no good, so I chucked it. The fact is, I didn't want to do anything, and I used to hit it up occasionally and paint things to assert my independence of public opinion. It was no use; couldn't get famous that way; only invited the parental wrath. Then a yellow newspaper printed a whole page of pictures of American degenerates, sons of rich families, and would you believe it, there I was, like Abou Ben Adhem, leading all the rest! It almost broke my mother's heart, and my father stopped speaking

to me. It struck in on me, too, to find myself heralded as a common blackguard, so I went into exile — way up in the Maine woods and lived with the lumber-jacks. Up there I met Paul Stoddard. He's the head of the Brothers of Bethlehem who have a house over here in Virginia. The brothers work principally among men — miners, sailors, lumbermen. It's a great work and Stoddard's a big chap, as strong as a bull, who knows how to get close to all kinds of people. I learned all I know from Stoddard. One night as I lay there in my shanty it occurred to me that never in my whole stupid life had I done anything for anybody. Do you see? I wasn't converted, in the usual sense" — his manner was wholly serious now, and he bent toward Wayne with the sad little smile about his lips — "I didn't feel that God was calling me or anything of that kind; I felt that Man was calling me: I used to go to bed and lie awake up there in the woods and hear the wind howling and the snow sifting in through the logs, and that idea kept worrying me. A lot of the jacks got typhoid fever, and there wasn't a doctor within reach anywhere, so I did the best I could for them. For the first time in my life I really felt that here was something worth doing, and it was fun, too. Stoddard went from there down to New York to spend a month in the East Side and I hung on to him — I was afraid to let go of him. He gave me things to do, and he suggested that I go into the ministry — said my work would be more effective with an

organization behind me — but I ducked and ducked hard. I told him the truth, about what I didn't believe, this and that and so on; but he put the thing to me in a new way. He said nobody could believe in man who didn't believe in God, too! Do you get the idea? Well, I was a long time coming to see it that way.

"It was no good going home to knock around and no use discussing such a thing with my family, and I knew people would think me crazy. Stoddard was going West, to do missionary stunts in Michigan, where there were more lumber camps, so I went along. I used to help him with the lumber-jacks, and try to keep the booze out of them; and first thing I knew he had me reading and getting ready for orders; he said I'd better keep clear of divinity schools; and I guess he had figured it out that if I got too much divinity I would get scared and back water. Then I went home and broke the news to the family. They didn't take much stock in it; they thought I would take a tumble and be a worse disgrace than ever. But there was plenty of money and I had no head for business, anyhow, and there was a chance that I might become respectable, so I got ordained very quietly three years ago at a mission away up on Lake Superior where a bishop had taken an interest in me — and here I am."

The minister drew a pipe from his pocket, filled and lighted it, shaking his head at Craighill's offer of a cigar.

"Thanks; I prefer this. Hope the smoke won't

be painful to you; it's a brand they affect out in my suburb, but it's better than what we used to have up in the lumber camps. I still take the comfort of a pipe, but the drink I cut out and the swearing. As I remember, it was you who taught me to cuss in school because my stammering made it sound so funny."

Wayne had recalled a good many things about Paddock but the mood he had brought from his father's house did not yield readily to the confessions of this boyhood friend who had reappeared in the livery of the Christian ministry. The new status was difficult for Craighill to accept and, conscious of the antagonism his recital had awakened, Paddock regretted that he had volunteered his story. The Craighill whom he had known was a big, generous, outspoken fellow whom everybody liked; the man before him was morose and obstinately resentful: and the fact that he had caught him in his own office at an unusual hour, about to indulge his notorious appetite for drink, was in itself an unhappy circumstance. The bottle and the glass were, to say the least, an unfortunate background for reunion. Paddock touched Wayne's knee lightly; he wished to regain the ground he had lost by his frankness, which had so signally failed of response.

"You have certainly deviated considerably," remarked Wayne without humour. "I believe they call your kind of thing Christian sociology, and it's all right. I congratulate you on having struck something interesting in this life. It's more than

I've been able to do. Your story is romantic and beautiful; mine had better not be told, Jimmy. I'm as bad as they're made; I've hit the bottom hard. When you came in I had just reached an important conclusion, and was going to empty a quart to celebrate the event."

"Well?" inquired the minister, studying anew the fine head; the eyes with their hard glitter; the lips that twitched slightly; the fingers whose trembling he had noted in the lighting of repeated cigarettes. "Be sure I shall value your confidence, old man," said the minister encouragingly, smiling his sad little smile.

"I'm glad you're interested, Jimmy, but we've chosen different routes. Mine, I guess, has scenic advantages over yours and the pace is faster. You're headed for the heavenly kingdom. I'm going to hell."

CHAPTER IV

THE WAYS OF WAYNE CRAIGHILL

FOUR days passed. Wayne Craighill ceased twirling and knotting the curtain cord and held his right hand against the strong light of the office window to test his nerves. The fingers twitched and trembled, and he turned away impatiently and flung himself into a chair by his desk, hiding his hands and their tell-tale testimony deep in his pockets. Half a dozen times he shook himself petulantly and attacked his work with frenzied eagerness, as though to be rid of it in a single spurt; but after an hour thus futilely spent he threw himself back and glared at a large etching, depicting a storm-driven galleon riding wildly under a frightened moon, that hung against the dark-olive cartridge paper on the wall above his desk. Shadows appeared now and then on the ground-glass outer door, and lingered several times, testifying to their physical embodiment by violently seizing and rattling the knob. Craighill scowled at every assault, and presently when some importunate visitor had both shaken and kicked the door, he yawned and sought the window again, looking moodily down, as from a hill-top, upon the city of his birth, where practically all his life had been

spent, the City of the Iron Heart, lying like a wedge at the confluence of the two broad rivers.

Wayne had used himself hard, as the lines in his smooth-shaven face testified; but the vigour of the Scotch-Irish stock survived in him, and even to-day he carried his tall frame erectly. His head covered with brown hair in which there was a reddish glint, was really fine and his blue eyes, not just now at their clearest, had in them the least hint of the dreamer. His suit of brown — a solid colour — became him: he was dressed with an added scrupulousness as though in conformity to an inner contrition and rehabilitation. He was in his thirtieth year but appeared older to-day as his gaze lay upon the drifting, shifting smoke-cloud that hung above the Greater City.

The son of Colonel Roger Craighill was inevitably a conspicuous person in his native city and his dissipated habits had long been the subject of despairing comment by his fellow-citizens, and the text of occasiona llightly veiled sermons in press and pulpit. Dick Wingfield had once remarked that is was too bad that there were only ten commandments, as this small number painfully limited Wayne Craighill's possible infractions. It was Wingfield who named Wayne Craighill the Blotter, in appreciation of Wayne's amazing capacity for drink; and it was he who said that Wayne's sins were merely an expression of the law of compensation and were thrown into the scale to offset

Colonel Craighill's nobility and virtue. Whatever truth may lie in this, it is indisputable that the elder Craighill's rectitude tended to heighten the colour of his son's iniquities.

The Blotter had been drunk again. This is what would be said all over the Greater City. At the clubs it would be remarked that he had also had a fight with two policemen, and that he had been put in pickle at the Country Club and then smuggled to his office to await the arrival of Colonel Craighill, who had been to Cleveland to address something or other. The nobler his father's errands abroad, the wickeder were the Blotter's diversions in his absences. The last time that Roger Craighill had attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church Wayne had amused himself by violating all the city ordinances that interposed the slightest barriers to the enjoyment of life as he understood it. But the Blotter, it is only just to say, was still capable of shame. His physical and moral reaction to-day were acute; and he shrank from facing the world again. More than all, the thought of meeting his father face to face sent the hot blood surging to his head, intensifying its dull ache. His sister Fanny would be likely to show her sympathy and confidence by promptly giving a tea or a dinner to which he would be specially bidden, to demonstrate to the world that in spite of his derelictions his family still stood by him. The remembrance of past offenses, and of the definite routine that his restorations fol-

lowed, only increased his misery. The usual interview with his father, with whose mild, martyr-like forbearance he had long been familiar, rose before him intolerably.

A light tap at the inner door of Wayne's room caused him to leap to his feet and stand staring for a moment at a shadow on the ground glass. The door led into Roger Craighill's room, and as he had been thinking of his father, the knock struck upon his senses ominously. He hesitated an instant, curbing an impulse to fly; then the door opened cautiously, and Joe Denny slipped in, seated himself carelessly on a table in the centre of the room, and nursed his knee.

Consider Joe a moment; he is not the humblest figure in this chronicle: a tall, lithe young fellow, unmistakably Irish-American, with a bang of black hair across his forehead, and a humorous light in his dark eyes. His grin is captivating but we are conscious also of shrewdness in his face. (It took sharp sprinting to steal second when Joe had the ball in his hand!) He is trimly dressed in ready-made exaggeration of last year's style. His red cravat is fastened with a gold pin in the similitude of crossed bats supporting a tiny ball, symbol of our later Olympian nine. You may, if you like, look up Joe Denny's batting record for the time he pitched in the Pennsylvania State League, and you will thereby gauge the extent of New York's loss in having bought his "release" only a week before he broke his wizard's arm.

Joe, at ease on the table, viewed Mr. Wayne Craighill critically, but with respect. In his more tranquil moments Joe spoke a fairly reputable English derived from the public schools of his native hills, but his narrative style frequently took colour of the idiom of the diamond, and under stress of emotion he departed widely from the instruction imparted by the State of Pennsylvania on the upper waters of the Susquehanna.

"Say, the Colonel's due on the 4: 30."

Wayne straightened himself unconsciously and his glance fell upon the desk on which lay an accumulation of papers awaiting his inspection and signature.

"Who said so? I thought he wasn't due till to-morrow."

"I was up at the house when Walsh telephoned for the machine to go to the station. I guess the Colonel wired Walsh."

"I'd like to know why Walsh couldn't have done me the honour to tell me," said Wayne sourly.

"I guess Walsh don't know you're back. They asked me in the front office a while ago and I told 'em I guessed you were up at the Club; and then I came in here through the Colonel's room to see if you had stayed put."

Craighill was silent for a moment, then he asked:

"How long was I gone this time, Joe?"

He addressed young Denny without condescension, in a tone of kindness that minimized the obvious differences between them.

"It was Wednesday night you broke loose, and this is Saturday all right."

"I must have bumped some of the high places — my head feels like it. How about the newspapers?"

"Nothing doing! Walsh fixed that up all right. You see it was like this: you made a row on the steps of the Allequippa Club when I was trying to steer you home. I'd been waiting on the curb with a machine till about 1 A. M., and some of the gents followed you out of the Club and wanted you to come back and go to bed; and when a couple of cops came along, properly not seeing anything, and not letting on, you must up and jump on one of 'em and pound his head. Then the other cop broke into the fuss, and there was a good deal doing and I got you into the machine and slid for the Country Club and got a chauffeur's bed in the garage and sat on you till you went to sleep."

Wayne shrugged his shoulders.

"Was that all I did? It sounds pretty tame; I must be getting better — or worse."

He drew a cigarette from his case and struck a match before he remembered a rule that forbade smoking in office hours; then he found a cigar and chewed it unlighted. Joe eyed the littered desk reflectively.

"Say, you'd better brush that off before the Colonel comes."

"Put that stuff out of sight," commanded Wayne and tossed him his keys. "See here, Joe, I started Wednesday night and Thursday night I made a

row on the Club steps, and you took me out to Rosedale in the machine and kept me there till you smuggled me in here this afternoon. That's all right enough, but there was another chap in the row at the Club — I thought I was fighting the whole force, and you say there were two policemen there. There was another fellow besides the policemen."

"Forget it! Forget it!" grinned Denny, waving his hand airily. "The bases were full for a few minutes and a young gent came along and took our side against the cops, see? The two cops had us going some and this little chap blowing in out of a minor league rapped a two-bagger on the biggest cop's chin. 'You Mr. Craighill's chauffeur?' he says to me, sweet and gentle-like; and between us we picked you up and threw you into the machine and I cut for the tall, green hills. As the coal-oil lit up and she got in motion, I looked back, and our little friend that hit the cop was a handin' the cop his card."

Craighill frowned fiercely with the effort of memory.

"Who was this man that took my part? He must have followed me out of the Club."

"Nit; he was new talent; and listen — he was a Bible-barker."

"A minister?"

"Sure. He wore his collar buttoned behind and a three-story vest. He wasn't as tall as you or me but he was good and husky and he lined out

three on the cop's mug, snappy and zippy, like a triple-play in a tied game."

"A priest? It wasn't Father Ryan?"

"It wasn't the father; it was new talent, I tell you. The gent who came up here to see you the night you broke loose. He was out looking for you Thursday night; guess he heard you were going some. And after he spiked the cop and we got off in the machine there he stood bowing and tipping his dice to the cops and handing 'em his card."

Light suddenly dawned upon Wayne.

"Paddock; O Lord!" he ejaculated.

A clock tinkled five on the mantel and Wayne's manner changed. He pointed to the outer door.

"You'd better clear out. Stop in the front office and tell Mr. Walsh I'm here, do you understand?"

"Say, Mrs. Blair's been lookin' for you; she's had the 'phone goin' for two days. She flew in her machine to Rosedale to look for you but they were on and didn't give it away. You better call her up."

"Yes, I'll attend to it; clear out."

Already Colonel Craighill had quietly entered the adjoining room followed by an office boy bearing a travelling bag. On his desk lay a dozen sheets of paper, hardly larger than a playing card, and these he examined with the swift ease of habit. They were reports, condensed to the smallest compass, and expressed in bald dollars and tons all the Craighill enterprises. It was thus that

Roger Craighill, like a great commander, viewed the broad field of his operations through the eyes of others. Bank balances; totals of bills payable and receivable; so much coal mined at one point; so many tons of coke ready for shipment at another; the visible tonnage in the general market; the day's prices — these bare data were communicated to the chief daily at the close of business, and in his frequent absences were sent to him by wire. He summoned a boy.

"Please say to Mr. Walsh that I'm ready to see him."

Walsh appeared instantly: he had, indeed, been awaiting the summons, and was prepared for it. A definite routine attended every return of the chief to his headquarters. He invariably called Walsh, his chief of staff; and thereafter was ready to see his son. In every business office the high powers are merely tolerated by the subordinates, to whom the senior partner or the president is usually "the boss" or "the old man." Roger Craighill was not to be so apostrophized even behind his back: he was "the Colonel" to every one. To a few contemporaries only was Craighill "Roger" and these were citizens bound together by memories of the old city, who as young men had cheered Kossuth through the streets in 1851, and who a decade later had met in the Committee of Safety or marched South with musket or sword in hand.

"Ah, Walsh, how is everything going? I see that the pumps at No. 18 are out of order again. I

think I'd better go after the Watkins people personally about that; we've been patient enough with them."

Walsh nodded. He was short and thick and quite bald. He had formerly been the "credit man" of one of the Craighill enterprises, which, it happened, was a wholesale grocery; but he had grown into the confidence of Roger Craighill and when Craighill organized the grocery business into a corporation and began directing it from the fourteenth story of the Craighill building, Walsh became Craighill's confidential man of affairs, with broad administrative powers.

Walsh thrust his hands into the pockets of his office coat and began talking at once of several matters of importance connected with the Craighill interests. Craighill nodded oftener than he spoke as Walsh made his succinct statements. There was no sentiment in Walsh; his voice was as dry and hard as his facts. He had studied credits so long that his life's chief concern was solvency. He could tell you any day in the week the amount of bituminous coal in the bins at Cincinnati or Louisville; or whether the corner grocers of Johnstown or Youngstown had paid for their last purchases from the Wayne-Craighill Company. Craighill's inquiries were largely perfunctory, a fact not lost upon Walsh, who fidgeted in his chair.

"Everything seems all right," said Craighill, turning round and facing Walsh. "By the way, did the home papers report my address before the

Western Reserve Society? Here's a very fair account of it from the Cleveland papers. I'd be glad if you'd look it over. I'm often troubled, Walsh, by the amount of time these public and semi-public matters take, but in one way and another I am well repaid. They inject a certain variety into my life, and the acquaintances and friendships I have made among statesmen, educators, financiers and men of affairs are really of great value to me."

"Um."

Walsh twirled the clipping in his fingers. The discussion of anything outside the range of business embarrassed him. It was perfectly proper for Roger Craighill to spend his time with other gentlemen of wealth and influence in making after-dinner speeches and in seeking ways and means of ameliorating the condition of the poor whites or the poor blacks of the South, or in stimulating interest in the merit system, or in reforming the currency. Walsh thought favourably of these things, though he did not think of them deeply or often.

"Ah, Wayne!"

The moment had arrived for the son to show himself and Wayne Craighill entered from his own room and walked quickly to his father's desk. Walsh rose and examined the young man critically with his small, shrewd eyes, then left with an abrupt good night. Father and son greeted each other cordially; the father held the young man's hand a moment as they stood by the desk.

"Wayne, my boy!" said the elder warmly, "sit

down. How's Fanny? She came home from York Harbour rather early this year."

"Oh, she's all right," replied Wayne, though he had not seen his sister during his father's absence. He assumed that the fact of his latest escapade was known to his father. Everyone always seemed to know, though for several years Roger Craighill had suspended the rebukes, threats and expostulations with which he had met Wayne's earlier lapses. His father's cordiality put Wayne on guard at once: he suspected that he was to be taken to task for his sins with a severity that had drawn interest during his immunity.

"I am sorry to see that you have overdrawn your account somewhat," remarked Colonel Craighill, holding up one of the papers and examining it through his eye-glasses. His manner was now that of a teacher who has summoned an erring student for reproof. The mildness of his manner irritated Wayne, who was, moreover, honestly surprised by his father's statement.

"I didn't know that; in fact I don't believe that can be right, sir. What's the amount?"

"Four thousand dollars."

Wayne's surprise increased.

"It's an error. I have overdrawn no such amount; I'm sure of that." But his head still ached and he sought vainly for an explanation of the item on the sheet his father passed over to him.

"Wayne," began Colonel Craighill, "I simply cannot have you do this sort of thing. It's bad

for you, for you can have no need of any such sum of money in addition to your regular income and your salary; and it's bad for the office discipline. I have prided myself that some of the foremost men of the country have placed their sons in my care. Think of the effect on these young men out there," — he waved his hand toward the outer offices — "of your extravagant, wasteful ways."

Wayne was familiar enough with the black depths of his infamy and he knew his value as an example; but he groped blindly for an explanation of the overdraft. Suddenly the knowledge flashed upon him that it represented the price of some shares in a coal-mining company in which his father was interested. They had been offered for sale in the settlement of an estate and as he supposed that the Craighill interests already controlled the property he had purchased them on his own account a few days before, with a view to turning them over to his father on his return if he wished them. The amount was small as such transactions go, and as he had not the required sum in bank he overdrew his account in the office. His own income from various sources — real estate, bonds and shares representing his half of the considerable fortune left by Mrs. Craighill — was collected through the office, where he kept an open account. His father's readiness to pillory him increased the irritability left by his latest dissipation. A four-year-old child will not brook injustice; there is nothing a man resents more. He could very quickly

turn his father's criticism by an explanation; but just now in his bitterness he shrank from commendation. The gravamen of his offense was trifling; he had been misjudged; his pride had been touched; he refused to justify himself.

He returned to his own room where a little later Walsh found him. Walsh, having tapped on the outer door, was admitted in sulky silence and squeezed his fat bulk into a chair by Wayne's desk. He gazed at the son of his chief with what, for Walsh, approximated benevolence.

"I've been drunk," remarked Wayne, with an air of suggesting an inevitable topic of conversation.

"Um," growled Walsh. "I had heard something of it."

"I suppose everybody has heard it. My sprees seem to lack a decent cloistral quiet some way. Joe told me you had shut up the newspapers. When my head stops aching I'll try to thank you in proper language."

"I'll tell you how you can avoid getting drunk in the future if you are interested," remarked Walsh.

"If you mean burning down the distilleries I'd like you to know that I'm not in a mood for joking."

"Um. I was not going to advise you to commit arson. I have never offered you any advice before; I'm going to give you some now. You've got about all there is out of drink and you'd better get interested in something else. The only way to stop is to quit, and you can do it. I've a notion

that you and I are going to be better acquainted in the future. Such being the idea I'd like to be sure that you are going to keep straight. You make me tired."

Wayne was not sure that he understood. No one, least of all his father's grim, silent lieutenant, had ever spoken to him in just this tone, and he was surprised to find that Walsh's method of attack interested him. He was humble before the old fellow in the linen coat.

"What's the use, Tom? I'm well headed for the bottom; better let me go on down."

"The top is less crowded and more comfortable than the bottom. Just as a matter of my own dignity I'd stay up as high as I could if I were you. I had a good chance to go down myself once, but I took a dip or two and it didn't look good down below — too many bones. Um. That's all of that."

He chewed an unlighted cigar ruminantly until Wayne spoke.

"The Colonel's going to get married."

"Um," Walsh nodded. His emotions were always under control and Wayne did not know whether he had imparted fresh information or not. He imagined he had, for it was not likely that his father would make a confidant of Walsh in any social matter.

"The Colonel knows his own business."

"As a matter of fact, does he?"

"Um."

Walsh's cigar pointed to a remote corner of the ceiling, but his eyes were fixed on Wayne. He had apparently no intention of discussing Colonel Craighill's marriage and he abruptly changed the subject.

"You bought fifty shares of Sand Creek stock the other day from the Moore estate."

Wayne scowled; these were the shares he had overdrawn his office account to buy, with the intention of turning them over to his father, and his father's criticism of the overdraft rankled afresh.

"Yes; I bought fifty shares. How did you find it out?"

"Tried to buy 'em myself and found you had beat me to 'em."

"I overdrew my office account to buy them. I thought father would want them; but now he can't have them."

"Why?"

"Because in a fit of righteousness he jumped me for my overdraft. It was the first time I was ever over; you know that, and it would have squared itself in a few days anyhow. But if you want those shares ——"

"I don't want 'em. The Colonel wants 'em. He told me to get 'em but I didn't know there was any great rush about it. The Colonel's friends in New York, that he got into the Sand Creek Company, asked him to pick up those shares; their control is by a narrow margin, and they wanted to fortify themselves. They'd looked to the Colonel

to take care of this little bunch. Does he know you've got 'em?"

"Oh, no; not on your life! After jumping me for buying them? My dear Tom Walsh, there *are* moments when the worm will turn!"

This was the first occasion on which Wayne had ever spoken of his father to Walsh except in terms of respect, and Walsh was perfectly aware of it.

"If I were you I'd turn those shares over to the Colonel."

"If it's anything to you — if you're going to be criticized for failing to get them, I'll give them to him — or I'll sell them to you."

"No, you don't have to worry about me, my boy; I can take care of myself, but I don't want you to feel that way toward your father. It ain't healthy; it ain't right."

"Please don't do that, Tom. My head aches, and you're too good a fellow to preach. I didn't know those shares were so valuable; it was just a piece of fool luck that I got them. I suppose they thought letting me have them was the same as passing them over to father."

"That's the way it ought to be."

"But, dear old Tom," and he laid his hand on Walsh's thick knee, "dear old Tom, it isn't, it isn't, it ain't!"

CHAPTER V

A CHILD OF THE IRON CITY

WAYNE and his father met the next morning at breakfast, a function at which, when Wayne appeared, the senior Craighill discussed the day's news in his large way as a student of affairs. This morning he had brought the newspapers to the table and they were piled by his plate.

"I sent out notice of my engagement to all the papers last night. I suppose it was to be expected that they would treat the matter sensationally. They have spared nothing."

Colonel Craighill deplored the pernicious tendencies of the American press generally and of the local newspapers particularly. They made light work of reputations, he declared; they were bitterly partisan in politics; and Colonel Craighill believed thoroughly that in an independent and courageous press lay the hope of the Republic. He pushed the papers toward his son with the tips of his fingers.

"They insisted on my portrait and had to have Miss Allen's also. If I had refused they would probably have substituted something even worse than you see there. A picture like that is bound to awaken prejudice. It's an outrage on public decency!" he ended indignantly.

Wayne eyed the papers critically. There was no lack of respect in the text which was spread across two columns at the top of the page beneath the joined portraits; he even caught the flavour of some of his father's own phrases, though they were not directly quoted, and as for the illustrations, they were not better or worse than the average newspaper pictures. One journal presented a sketch of the Craighill family, with generous reference to Wayne's mother and her high place among the women who had contributed to the city's better life. Miss Allen was a woman of unusual charm, of an old New England family, who had lived much abroad, and her coming would be an event of interest and importance in the Greater City. Mrs. Blair and Wayne were mentioned in all these recitals to complete the family history.

"You get off easy," remarked Wayne, carelessly, scanning the column of condensed news.

"The *Star* has an editorial on some of the points I made in my Cleveland speech. I suppose Bixby had that done. Bixby's a good enough fellow, but why he should own a newspaper as vile as the *Star* I don't know."

"I guess men don't own newspapers for fun," remarked Wayne. "Bixby bought the *Star* to use as a club in his other businesses. It would help us if we had a sheet to fight back with."

"I had a chance to buy the *Star* when Bixby took it, but I had too many cares already."

"Well, you might have made a decent paper of it.

That's what you've always said we need in this town; but nobody wants to sink money in a daily Sunday-school organ."

"If I had my life to live over again I should go into journalism; its opportunities for public service are limitless and I don't believe the people really want these indecent things that are thrown on our doorsteps to-day."

The decline of the American press was a familiar topic of conversation at the Craighill breakfast table, but to-day it served to divert attention from the great issue of the hour. When Wayne had finished with the papers he told the maid to take them away and addressed himself to the simple breakfast.

"They talk of running John for mayor," remarked Colonel Craighill, "and I hope he'll consent to be the Municipal League's candidate. He'd have the support of the best element beyond a doubt."

"Beyond a doubt," Wayne repeated, not particularly interested in his brother-in-law's political ambitions; "but that wouldn't elect him. We've had reform candidates before who were just as good as John. They start all right, but they don't finish."

"All we can do in such matters is to keep up the fight. The powers of evil can't prevail forever."

"No; but they work with the boys in the trenches while the rest of us abuse them over expensive dinners. There's a practical difference. This town's all right. If we'd stop abusing it and suppress the muck-rakers we might get somewhere."

"I'm glad Fanny takes my marriage in good part," remarked Colonel Craighill, to whom Wayne's political views were not important. Wayne answered cheerfully for his sister's acceptance of the new situation in family affairs.

"Oh, Fanny's all right! You can always be sure she'll rise to an occasion."

"Fanny is a fine woman," declared Colonel Craighill.

"She is all of that," replied Wayne.

"I used to fear, in her young girlhood, that she was a trifle flighty; but marriage settled her wonderfully."

"There's a prevailing impression that it will do that," retorted Wayne.

"What a happy future would be yours, my son, if you would take life a little more seriously," sighed Colonel Craighill. "I've spoken of you very little to Adelaide; but you must consider her hereafter. I hope that her coming may mark a new era for you. I cannot but think that her influence will be for good in the family."

"I dare say it will," assented Wayne. "You need have no fears about Fanny and me and our treatment of your wife. You know — about my habits and all that — I think I'm ready to quit. I've decided that there's nothing in drink, and I've given it up."

"God grant that it may be so!"

Colonel Craighill spoke with deep emotion. Wayne had, in the old times when his father used to

pray over him, often promised under pressure: this morning he had voluntarily announced his intention to reform. It was in Colonel Craighill's mind at once that already good was coming of the marriage; that Wayne's pride was aroused; that he wished thus to mark the coming of the new wife. Wayne was pouring himself a third cup of coffee, and this unusual indulgence he associated with some method which his son had adopted for breaking down the baser appetite.

"I have given up drink," repeated Wayne, helping himself to sugar; "there's nothing in it"; and while his words and tone were not quite what Roger Craighill would have liked, he could not quibble over phrases or question the sincerity of this voluntary declaration. He had long ago ceased trying to understand Wayne's moods; his son's state of mind this morning was unusually baffling.

"That you should be an honourable man has been the great prayer of my life, Wayne," he said, with feeling.

"I'm afraid you've been praying in the wrong place. If God never helped me, maybe the devil will; he knows me better!" Wayne dropped his spoon into his saucer and laughed. "That's almost blasphemy, isn't it? The car's at the door and whenever you're ready ——"

They rode into town together, each in his own corner of the tonneau as was the morning habit, and Colonel Craighill spoke only once or twice. In the lobby of the building that bore his name the day's

sensation was already in the air. One or two friends, tenants of his building, greeted Colonel Craighill cordially as the elevator shot them skyward and congratulated him with warmth; and every clerk in the Craighill offices, where the announcement had already been freely discussed, watched father and son pass on to their own rooms with a newly awakened curiosity.

"Oh, Wayne," said Colonel Craighill, as they separated, "I should like you to lunch with me at the Club to-day — the Allequippa — about one. We'll walk over together."

Wayne pondered this when he had settled himself at his own desk. In normal circumstances he saw little of his father during the day. Colonel Craighill usually took luncheon with half a dozen men of his own age who represented the solid interests of Pittsburg. He prided himself on his knowledge of the general business conditions; he liked, as he put it, to keep in touch with the life of the city, and he so managed his hour and a half at the Allequippa as to gain information from authoritative sources on all manner of subjects. He was more or less conscious of the fact that he touched life on more sides than the majority of his fellows. They talked of iron and coal because they were, like himself, interested in forges and mines; but he could discuss cotton with knowledge of the conditions in India, or wheat, with the Argentine forecast in his mind. He subscribed for English reviews which he occasionally passed on to business friends whose

narrower horizons were otherwise amply illuminated by the newspapers.

The Allequippa Club, at the luncheon hour, became a seething board of trade whose unrecorded transactions ran to large figures. Stock subscription papers were handed from table to table as carelessly as the wine card. Through these years of the Great Prosperity it was as easy to count millions as to count heads. In fact, Mr. Richard Wingfield, watching and listening in his corner, announced that a million had become a contemptible sum that hardly assured one's daily bread.

Wayne Craighill was, in the fullest sense, a child of the city. Its oldest blood was in his veins. His mother had been a Wayne, the daughter of a merchant whose great-grandfather had fought in the Continental army, and whose grandfather had shared Perry's glory on Lake Erie. The Craighills were not so old on this soil, but the name was not a negligible one in local history. Wayne's grandfather Craighill had sat in the State Legislature and in Congress, and when Roger Craighill married the only daughter of the house of Wayne and the last of the family, the best blood of the State was united. The Craighill building, rising tower-like in the steep, narrow street of this many-towered Babel, spoke not merely for present affluence, but for the prescience that had secured and held the iron hills surrounding.

Eastern Pennsylvania is better known in song, story and history than the state's western hills, but

the Greater City, big, brawny, powerful, sprawled over valley and hill where the broad rivers gather new courage for their adventure seaward, hides in its iron heart many and sonorous Iliads. It may fairly be said that Pennsylvania is our most typical state and Pittsburg our most typical city, for here the weakness and strength of the democracy wage daily war. Here political corruption has been venomously manifested. Those who seek to account for the unaccountable ask whether the old Scotch clan-instinct has not reasserted itself in the politics of the state. The question is suggestive; but it may not be discussed in these pages. The spirit of Democracy, brooding upon the hills, and looking down upon the City of the Iron Heart, must smile often, wondering that a people so highly favoured and with antecedents so honourable, tamely submit to plunder and bend their necks so meekly to the spoilsman. But a new era was even now at hand. "There shall be an highway for the remnant of his people," declared Isaiah, prophet of the day of kings, but a higher light was already stealing into the Iron City. The "remnant" was proving its own quality by searching out the squalor of its back doors and "runs" where wan spectres of Decadence elbowed ill-begotten, helpless, staring-eyed Defectives and Dependents.

It may be said that at Pittsburg the East ends and the West begins. The division is in nothing more pronounced than in the speech of the native. In the noonday throng of the Allequippa Club it

puzzles the stranger. It is not the lazy drawl that crept into the Central West from the Southeast with the early migration, and that is still discernible wherever the old stock has held its own, but a hybrid wrought of Scotch-Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch influences. It is less interesting for elisions and the flattening of vowels than for its cadences. In familiar dialogue these are marked and weave a spell upon the unfamiliar ear. They are not peculiar to the man in the street, but flavour in the polite babble of drawing rooms. They lure the ear of strangers, and newcomers unconsciously adopt them. The operators at the telephone exchange teach the most common and the most readily communicable of these cadences daily. In repeating a number of four figures the voice invariably rises on the next to the last syllable to fall again at the end. The native tongue, long attuned to this practice, adds a word to short sentences so that the intonation may not fail to scan and thus miss its effect. For example: "Did he get it?" does not quite lend itself to the usage; but if we prefix *And:* (And did he *get* it?) the speaker satisfies his own ear. Those who are keen for controversy in such matters may gnaw this bone all they like. Some will trace it to Scotch, others to Irish influences; but from the lips of the pretty girls of the Greater City, whether behind shop counters or tea tables, it is melodious and haunting. To some shrewder pen than this must be left a prediction as to the ultimate fate of our language at this great Western gateway, where the mingling of dialects spoken under

all the flags of Europe is bound to exert in time new influences on the common speech.

As Colonel Craighill and his son entered the Club to-day commerce seemed less insistently dominant. Their names had been on many lips; and they were at once the centre of attraction. The ticker curled its tape unnoticed in the basket while the Craighill marriage was discussed. As the two checked their coats the congratulations began, and in the lounging room they were immediately the centre of a group of friends. Wayne, it seemed, was the object of more attention than his father; the "Colonel," as nearly everyone called him would of course beam in his characteristic way; but Wayne, in his own relation to the matter, was to be viewed in a fresh aspect. There were those among his intimates who chaffed him about his new stepmother. She would, they hinted, undoubtedly visit upon him the traditional contumely of stepmothership. Others re-appraised the Craighill millions with a view of determining just how much the new wife's advent would cut into the expectations of Mrs. Blair and Wayne. Roger Craighill's first wife, every one remembered, had brought him a considerable fortune, and many were now trying to recall how much of this had reposed in him, and how much had passed direct to the children.

Dick Wingfield, who crystalized in his own person the Greater City's aspirations in art and music, declared as he surveyed the large dining room and contemplated the two Craighills in their unusual

intimacy, that for the hour Pig Iron had yielded the centre of the stage to Cupid. Many gentlemen left their tables, napkin in hand, to congratulate the Colonel; and Wayne, too, submitted his hand to many grasps, some of them lingeringly sympathetic, others expressive of a general friendliness and liking. The Colonel was a shrewd one, so many remarked; it was a real stroke to present himself to the eye of the Greater City in company with his son on this memorable day. It was not like Colonel Craighill to make a marriage that would estrange his children; the outward and visible acceptance by them of the impending union was indubitably presented in the corner where father and son ate their luncheon together. When there came a lull in the visits to the Craighill table Wingfield lounged thither, and drew up his chair for a chat with Wayne. Not being a hypocrite, Wingfield shook hands with the Colonel but did not refer to the topic of the hour. He addressed himself to Wayne on the prospects of the Greater City's orchestra for the winter and called his attention to some new pictures at the Art Institute. He mentioned the presence in America of a great French portrait painter with whose work Mr. Craighill was familiar.

"You should certainly have him paint you, Colonel. This is the best place in the world for the assembling of works of art; the grime soon makes old masters of them all. The orchestra trustees meet at three this afternoon in the board room of the Fine Arts building. Your check was generous,

Colonel; but Wayne will have to work. Don't forget the meeting, Wayne. We count on him, Colonel Craighill. By the way, Wayne, an old friend of ours has turned up here — Paddock of agile legs and stammering tongue. What profits it, may I ask, for any man to lay up store of wealth for his children when they're likely to scorn the fleshpots for locusts and wild honey? One might expect Paddock to come here to study the iron business, but bless me! he's come to save our souls."

"Yes; I've seen Jimmy."

"I thought you hadn't seen him," remarked Colonel Craighill in surprise.

"Oh, yes; I ran into him the other night by chance," replied Wayne, "just after we had been talking about him. He's the same chap. Our meeting wasn't very fortunate — in fact, we didn't seem to hit it off."

"He always was modest about himself, you remember," said Wingfield. "I wanted to give him a dinner at the Club to interest people in his missionary schemes, but he wouldn't have it."

"He's doing a noble work, I hear," said Colonel Craighill. "It's unfortunate that he won't accept help from those among us who know the local conditions."

"Well, it's a relief that philanthropy can enter this town just once without preluding itself with a lot of bombast and brag," sighed Wingfield. "I'm for Paddock; in fact, I have every honourable intention of placing my soul at his disposal. It's only decent to patronize new home industries."

Colonel Craighill had not known of Wayne's election to the orchestra board, and as Wingfield left he said:

"That's the kind of thing I like our name to be identified with — the best aims and endeavours of the city. I'm deeply gratified to know that you are interested in the orchestra. We older men have our hands full. It's for your generation to build upon our foundations."

"They put me on the board, I guess, because I used to play the fiddle!"

"So you did! That was your dear mother's idea — that you should take violin lessons. As I remember, you showed considerable aptitude."

"I believe I rather liked it."

And Wayne saw himself again in knickerbockers standing at his mother's side by the piano, in the half-remembered days of his happy childhood. He was thrown back upon the mood of four nights before, when he had stood before his mother's portrait and felt the call of memory. There was in his heart a turbulent rebellion against this impeccable father, who faced him as always, bland, poised, assured. Imaginary wrongs grew real; slight injuries and injustices, long forgotten, cried fiercely in their recrudescence for vengeance.

And conscious of its foulness he had planned an evil thing. It had crossed his mind like a dark shadow, obscuring the fair horizon of his better nature the moment he looked upon the face of the woman his father was about to marry. He had known her

first, that was the beautiful irony of it; and he was keeping silent because in her, installed as his father's wife, he saw a means of retaliation. His hatred of his father was no growth of a day, and the face in the locket, the letter from the woman herself that he had read the night he began his latest debauch, had hardened it into a fixed idea.

The knowledge that his father had brought him here to-day merely to advertise the perfect amity of their relationship angered him; and now Colonel Craighill dismissed him urbanely, saying that he would take his cigar with Fraser, the short, grave, round-faced corporation lawyer, who was soon, it appeared, to accept the nation for his client.

Wingfield, with his eye on the situation, carried Wayne below for a game of billiards.

CHAPTER VI

BEFORE A PORTRAIT BY SARGENT

WAYNE CRAIGHILL'S education had been planned by his father on broad lines. The Craighills had of old been Presbyterians, but Colonel Craighill was no bigot; therefore, in keeping with his generous attitude in such matters, Wayne was sent to a preparatory school in Vermont conducted under Episcopalian auspices. Moreover, the head of St. John's was a personal friend, whom Colonel Craighill knew well. Nothing could be better for the boy than a few years spent under the eye of the famous master. The transition from the Presbyterianism in which he was born to the High Church school was abrupt. The very vocabulary of worship was different; the choral services in the beautiful chapel appealed to his emotional nature, and he found a quiet joy in his own participation in the singing when he attained in due course to a place in the orderly offices of the choir. From the preparatory school Wayne went to the Institute of Technology. His mother had pleaded for the law; but Colonel Craighill pointed out the superiority of scientific education in a day when science guarded so many of the approaches to success. And Wayne, born among the iron hills, was persuaded that his best

course lay in fitting himself for a career in keeping with the greatest interests of his native state, and so his father prevailed, and Wayne had, not without much stress and resistance of spirit, taken his degree in science. Certain aspects of mining, and of the chemistry of the forge had appealed to him, but rather to his strong imagination than to any practical use he saw in his knowledge. He had spent a summer in a large colliery, obedient to his father's wish that the young man should apply and test theory before he had a chance to forget the teaching of the schools; and Wayne had entered into this with relish. But while he had taken into his own strong hands every tool used in mine labour, and fed boiler furnaces and sat by the scales in weigh houses, he had shared also the social life of the world of coal. He had spent his evenings in the saloons of the mine village, talking and drinking with the miners in a spirit of democracy that won their affections. His violence when drunk had first manifested itself at this period. He was so big and powerful that the fierce reinforcement of his natural strength by drink made him a terror. He had once run wild through the long black lane of a mine, driving an electric motor and train of wallowing mine cars, captured after a fight from their lawful conductors, smashing finally a line of coal pillars with a force that might have shaken the huge cave down upon him.

So far as his own aptitude and taste were concerned his education went for naught. The Homeric,

picturesque side of industrial Pennsylvania appealed to him. The wresting of the enormous latent power from the hills; the sky lighted by the glow of multitudinous ovens and furnaces; the roar and shriek of machinery; the grimy toilers at their moulding and tempering — these and like phenomena touched his imagination, and he cared little for their practical side while they were so much more captivating as panorama than as trade. We need not deal in unprofitable speculations as to what a different education might have made of Wayne Craighill; for an intelligent appreciation of books and pictures and a love of music are too easily confused with genius. Let it suffice that some playful god had injected into his blood a drop of the divine essence, enough merely to visit upon him the fleeting moods of the dreamer and the restless longings of those who seek the light that never was.

His nature was compounded of many elements of good and evil. Taste, delicacy, fine feeling, he had in abundance; he was sensitive to the appeal of beautiful things. In fits of solitude and industry he would read voraciously; many subjects awakened his curiosity. But his passions were strong and deep, and they had their way with him. Again, his restraint and measure were surprising. Wingfield, who knew him best of all, was amazed at times by the sobriety and wisdom of Wayne's judgments. We have said that he was the child of his city; more than this, he not unfitly expressed its genius, its confused aims, its weaknesses and

its aspirations. The iron of the hills was in his blood; and iron, let us remember, has the merit as well as the defects of its qualities!

Joe drove Wayne to the Modern Art Institute in the machine. He went early to have a glimpse of several recent additions to the collection before the meeting of the orchestra committee, and later he was to go to his sister's.

The peace of the quiet gallery enfolded him gratefully. He paid his respects to old favourites, saving a half-hour for the new arrivals. Dick Wingfield's mother, convoying two girls, was among the other visitors. He had reached a point at which, half-unconsciously, he gave the women he knew an opportunity to cut him if they wished. The two girls became rather obviously intent upon the upper line of canvasses as he passed them. They were the daughters of his father's neighbours; they had known him all their lives, and yet they deliberately turned their backs upon him. He had paused, a little resentful, a little ashamed, in a farther corner, when Mrs. Wingfield drew near and spoke to him. She had been one of his mother's intimate friends and she touched him gently on the arm.

"I am glad to see you, Wayne. We very rarely meet any more. I wish you would come to see me."

She was so gentle, the meaning of her kindness struck so deep that he flushed as he took her hand.

"I have never lost faith in you, Wayne."

"Thank you; you're the only one, then, Mrs. Wingfield. You and Dick are about all I have left."

"Who is this woman your father is marrying?" she demanded with sudden asperity.

"A lady, of course. What would you expect of my father?"

"I would expect him to be like all the other old fools," she declared. "A woman like your mother, Wayne Craighill, can have no successor."

She still clasped his hand lightly, and he bent over her with deferential courtesy.

"I hope he is marrying a good woman for your sake — and Fanny's."

"Father wouldn't marry any other kind; you may be sure of that," laughed Wayne.

"I don't know anything of the kind. I have waited a good many years to see your father do something outrageous and now I'm going to be satisfied. Who is this person, anyhow?"

"I positively decline to hear my future stepmother spoken of as a person!"

"I dare say the word flatters her. I'm telling all your mother's old friends that we've got to cut the woman on principle."

"The town will sit at her feet. You will yourself call upon her the day of her arrival."

"Not unless I'm insane, Wayne Craighill! The newspapers everywhere are making us out the wickedest city in the world, and between stock gambling and poker and divorces and worse we're

undoubtedly going to the bad. It's time for us old settlers to assert ourselves. This woman your father is going to marry *may* be perfectly respectable, but I decline to know her."

With this declaration Mrs. Wingfield rejoined her charges who hovered discreetly in a far corner in the belief that she was lecturing Wayne Craighill upon his sins. Wayne had been touched by her kindness in speaking to him when other women in her own circle were cutting him; and the encounter left him brooding upon his father's marriage.

He wondered whether his mother's friends would really show any resentment at the coming of his father's new wife. He had watched such cases before and was skeptical. His father was a man of far-reaching business interests, and while there were women like Mrs. Wingfield who were courageous enough themselves to support a sentiment, their husbands would counsel caution and advise against incurring the ill-will of a man of Colonel Craighill's wealth and influence. He had the gallery to himself for a few minutes and sat down before one of the more important new portraits that he had particularly wished to see. He could not fix his mind upon it, but sat staring at the canvas.

A young woman had entered the hall and was moving slowly along the line studying the pictures with the greatest intentness. She was without hat or coat and carried in her hand a tablet and pencil. She quite obscured now the portrait at which he had been staring vacantly; it seemed, for an instant,

before his eyes accommodated themselves to the intrusion of her interposed figure, that she had slipped into the canvas itself. The lady of the portrait, in her sumptuous evening toilet, was not, however, long to be confused with this girl in her plain cloth skirt and simple shirt-waist. She was studying the portrait critically, her head tilting now to one side, now to another, as she surveyed the great artist's work. Her movements were swift and eager, and she made, he thought, an obeisance of reverence before the lady's portrait; but she remained crouched upon one knee and upon the other held her tablet and sketched rapidly with her pencil. He had at first thought her an attachée of the gallery, but now he surmised that she was a student of the art school, rendering homage before a picture whose charm and technical perfection commanded her admiration. It was a worthy object for any one's homage, Wayne knew, as he surveyed it over the girl's dark head. He sat very quiet, fearing that he might disturb her, glancing from the richly clad lady in the frame to her kneeling figure. Her shirt-waist was plain and of cheap material; the skirt disclosed a coarse shoe that had clearly been bought for service. Poor girls with ambitions in the arts did not appeal to him abstractly; there was never any chance of their getting anywhere. But he was, it cannot be denied, a man who rarely missed an opportunity where women are concerned. His adventures had been many and discreditable. He had tried his powers

often and had the conceit of his successes. He was already seeking some excuse for addressing her.

Suddenly she rose, with a little hopeless sigh, crumpling the sketch in her fingers.

"Sargent didn't do it either, the first time," remarked Wayne.

"No," she replied, her eyes wistfully upon the picture, "I suppose he didn't."

She did not look at him; but he was studying her face, which was still rounded in girlish lines. She was wonderfully fair, of the type distinguished by close texture of skin and faintest colour beneath, — the merest hint of colour, subdued, half-revealed, vague, like the pink shadow in white roses. Her eyes at once arrested and held his attention. They were blue — the indefinable blue of sun-flooded mid-sea — and her dark head had not prepared him for this. She looked at him gravely once, but, with the portrait still in her eyes, only half seeing him. The dejection of the young aspirant who gazes upon an achievement he feels to be immeasurably beyond his own powers was written upon her face. Wayne had expected that she would show embarrassment when he revealed himself, but her indifference piqued him. Here, clearly, was no subject for easy conquest. She seemed sincerely interested in the beautiful painting before which they stood, and perhaps, after all, she was not the usual paint-smearing trifler, but a serious student. She spoke further of the portrait, and he had now a half-amused sense that she was speaking to herself rather than

to him. He was, in a way, a lay figure, to be suffered for a moment as though he were as wooden as the bench from which he had risen.

"I was trying to copy the hand — the fifth time to-day — and I simply can't do it. As it rests on the arm of the chair — there — it is perfectly natural; but I can't get it; I simply can't."

She uncrumpled her sketch and glanced at it again; then with fresh disdain she shut her hand upon it. Her pencil dropped and he picked it up. The point was broken. She put out her hand for it but he looked at it ruefully.

"If you can wait a moment I will sharpen it for you."

"No, thank you. I must get my things and go."

"But to leave the gallery with a spoiled sketch and a broken point to your pencil would be most unfortunate. If you will hold the paper to catch the shavings I'll sharpen it in a jiffy. Then you can go away armed for another day's attack. To retreat now, discouraged, with a pointless pencil would never do in the world."

He laughed his pleasure in the encounter. She carried her dark head a little high; and now that he looked directly into her eyes there hovered in them the faintest hint of gray that further strengthened the suggestion of the sea.

"I am not the least superstitious," she said.

"But I am! As a friend of art I could not think of allowing you to leave with a broken pencil. Something would undoubtedly happen to you on the way home."

He had caught her attention; his manner was half mocking, half serious; and he drew out his knife to prolong the interview. Flattery spoke in his words and manner: Wayne Craighill was not ignorant of the way of a man with a maid. The girl held the paper while he sharpened the pencil deliberately, and she took careful note of him and his belongings.

"We must be very careful not to drop the shavings. The curator would make a terrible row about it. Now that we seem to be alone, with a knife in our posession, we might cut this portrait out of its frame and you could take it home to study at your leisure. Rolled up, you could carry it right out of the front door, and the newspapers would have a seven days' wonder, the stolen Sargent! There! Not a bad job if I do say it myself."

He handed her the pencil and took from her the paper with its shavings and lead dust.

"Now, it's only fair that I should have your sketch for my trouble! I shall keep it as a slight souvenir — of the beginning — of our acquaintance ——"

He was folding it carefully to hold the litter, and he glanced up to find that she had flushed angrily.

"Give it to me, please."

"But really ——"

"Give it to me!"

"I beg your pardon."

She held out her hand and he placed the little

packet in her palm. It was, he saw, a hand that had known labour. It was a long hand and a hand of strength, and as he was mindful of such matters, it impressed itself upon his memory.

"Thank you," she said, and turned away.

"I am sorry I made you angry. I did not mean to do that. I come here quite often. I hope I shall see you again. Some day you will catch the trick of the lady's hand. I'm sure of that."

His tone was kind, his manner ingratiating; the meeting was altogether to his liking — from such a beginning he had often gone far. This girl bore the marks of cultivation; it was in her voice, her manner, the poise of her splendid head. She was poor — that was evident — but this was no barrier; her poverty presented, in fact, an avenue of access. It had been his experience that the bold approach was the surest. She was already moving away, carrying her head high, the anger still in her face, and he followed her.

"Please don't be too hard on me," he begged; and she stopped and looked at him, looked at him with frank curiosity that turned, as their eyes met, to a scorn not less frank.

"I don't care for your acquaintance, Mr. Wayne Craighill," she said with all composure, and walked hurriedly from the room.

He was fully sensible of the contempt with which she had spoken his name, a name that was odious to clean women in this city of his birth. He mused upon this fact as he started toward the door through

which she had vanished; he was a notorious character whom people of all classes knew by sight and reputation. She had, he imagined, suffered him to speak to her only that she might see for herself how contemptible man might become. The girl's scorn emphasized his degradation. She was unknown and poor, but he had sunk so low that even poverty and obscurity shrank from him. Those simpering young things who had cut him a little while before, those bread and butter misses who reflected merely the meticulous virtue of their own social order, did not matter. But this young woman with her labour-roughened hands had widened the gulf between him and decency with a glance, a turn of the head, a word. Her words continued to mock him as he left the gallery and descended the stairway to the orchestra board's room below. He kept wondering what musical instrument her voice suggested and the thought of her was so enthralling that he passed the committee room and did not come to himself until a guard touched his cap and pointed him to the door.

He and Wingfield were the only members of the board who appeared to-day, as frequently happened. Wayne sat down at a window to discuss the programmes that had been submitted by the orchestra director, which Wingfield now proceeded to tear to pieces.

"That Dutchman's idea of popular music is certainly exquisite. We're not going to appeal to the primitive tastes of our dear fellow-citizens by

larding a Wagnerian programme with the Blue Danube waltz and the Bon-Ton two-step. And Mendelssohn's Spring Song as a harp solo is too stale. We're going to keep on shoving symphonies into the people of our dear city this winter as you shovel coal into a furnace. Well, what now?"

Wayne's glance, straying to the street through the window by which they sat, had fallen upon the girl whom he had left in the gallery a moment before. She had emerged from the main entrance of the building and was moving off briskly. But what had drawn an exclamation from Craighill was the appearance upon the scene of a man who seemed to have been waiting and who now followed the girl at a discreet distance. It was, beyond question, Joe, Wayne's chauffeur, whom he had dismissed for the day an hour before.

Wingfield, following Wayne's glance, saw only the girl, now passing rapidly out of sight.

"Who's your Diana, Wayne? She has the stride of a goddess and carries her head as though she had just brushed the rest of the deities off Olympus."

"I don't know her," said Craighill, and changed the subject.

CHAPTER VII

WAYNE COUNSELS HIS SISTER

MR. RICHARD WINGFIELD, unjustly called the Cynic, was suspected of literary ambitions; but the suspicion was based upon nothing weightier than a brochure on golf which he had printed at his own expense for private circulation, and a study of the Greater City, abounding in sly ironies, which had appeared with illustrations in a popular periodical.

Wingfield, if we may enter briefly into particulars, was tall and thin, with a close-cropped beard and dark hair combed to the smoothness of onion-skin. He was near-sighted, and his twinkling eye-glasses were protected by a slight gold chain. His aspect was severe, his manner disconcertingly serious. He carried, in all weathers, an umbrella whose handle bore on a silver plate the anticipatory legend, "Stolen from Richard Wingfield." He was on many committees; he gave luncheons for actors, lecturers and other distinguished visitors; he attended the opera in New York and was reported now and then to be engaged to a prima donna. He patronized a private gymnasium and was a capital fencer. He cultivated the society of physicians, discussing the latest discoveries of Vienna and Paris in sophis-

ticated terminology; he sat in the amphitheatre at surgical clinics, inscrutable and grave. His interest in medicine gave rise to the belief about the Club that he suffered from an incurable malady; but his medical cronies declared that he was as sound as wheat and would live forever. He affected an air of not caring greatly; he uttered paradoxes and enjoyed mystifying people; he quizzed likely subjects and had never been known to laugh aloud. It was he who first announced that five generations constitute an old family in Pittsburg. Practical men called Wingfield a loafer; others insinuated that his private life would not bear scrutiny. (A man who drinks nothing but koumiss in a club famed for its rye essences is sure to be the victim of calumny.) There was a particular little table in the corner of the Allequippa Club's smoking room — a room where all branches of human endeavour were represented at five o'clock every afternoon, from the twisting of stogies up through the professions to the canning of entrées — there, at his own little table, sat Mr. Wingfield, watching, as he said, the best men of the Greater City at the light-hearted occupation of hardening their arteries.

There was no telling what might happen; it was never safe to leave town, and having spent two years abroad in his young manhood, Wingfield abstained from further foreign travel. One must pick up gossip when it is fresh. Nothing, he said, is so discouraging as to miss the prologue; and so he spent most of his time at home. "But for the

invention of sleeping-cars, and the fact of our being only one night from New York we should be the most moral city in the world," he averred. Wingfield was a University of Pennsylvania man, and spoke in bitter contumeliousness of Yale and Harvard, which are, as all Pennsylvania men are able to demonstrate, grossly inferior institutions. Princeton, to all such, is only a blot on the Mosquito Strip and the seat of ignorance. His mother was a Philadelphian, and Dick's two aunts were still residents of that city, where, through much careful instruction on their part, he knew Chestnut Street's meridional importance and the sacred names one must whisper and those one must not utter at all. His income was derived from coke ovens situated in three districts, and these it pleased his humour to call Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Wingfield walked to Mrs. Blair's gate with Wayne talking of pictures and music. He was a diligent collector of anecdotes of the brief sort that end with abrupt and unforeseen climaxes, and he recounted a number for Wayne's amusement. He carefully avoided any reference to Colonel Craighill's marriage, though he knew Wayne better than anyone else and might have spoken his mind without offense. Wayne had appeared unusually dull and depressed, a mood that frequently followed a debauch, and Wingfield, familiar with his latest escapade, wished to lift his friend's spirits if he could. At the Blairs' gate he declined Wayne's invitation to enter; but before they parted he made a point of suggesting

that they have luncheon together the next day. He was wiser and kinder than most people gave him credit for being, and here, it had occurred to him, he might do a little good.

Wayne entered his sister's house with a latch-key which it had been her own idea that he should carry. Mrs. Blair came out of the reception room while he was hanging up his hat and coat and asked him to go into the parlour for a few minutes.

"I have a caller — a matter of business — I'll be with you in a minute, Wayne. Find something to read, won't you?"

He bade her take her time and sought a table covered with magazines in three languages which gave to her library a rather club-like air. Mrs. Blair believed in self-culture and practised it *à la carte*, not overlooking the hors d'œuvres and desserts. He lighted a cigarette and turned over the periodicals until he found one that interested him. The murmur of voices reached him from the room across the hall; and he argued that the caller was no one he knew, or he should have been asked to come in and speak to her, such being Mrs. Blair's way. In a few minutes she carried the conversation to what appeared from her tone to be a satisfactory conclusion. It had grown dark and a servant brightened the hall and adjoining rooms with the mild electric glow that was Mrs. Blair's ideal of house lighting. Wayne, lifting his eyes at the soft flooding of his page, saw that his sister's caller was the girl he had met in the art gallery. Her long coat made her appear taller as she stood

against the background of the reception room portières. She was laughing happily at some remark of Mrs. Blair's. She murmured something that did not reach him, but Mrs. Blair caught her hands exclaiming:

"Don't trouble about it; it will soon begin to come easier. You are going to do something really worth while; remember, I have faith in you and you're bound to arrive. No one ever disappoints me!"

"I certainly hope I shan't be a disappointment to you, Mrs. Blair. I can never thank you enough for what you are doing for me."

As the outer door closed, Mrs. Blair appeared before Wayne.

"Well, what are they saying? Is the male population taking it calmly? Is there rebellion anywhere?"

Wayne tossed his magazine aside as his sister bent over and kissed him. She curled up in a big chair, while he brought his mind to bear upon her question.

"My dear Fanny, why do you ask anything so preposterous? Do you suppose anybody is going to tell our father that he ought to consider well the seriousness of a second marriage, his duty to his children, his duty to their mother and all that kind of rot? Not on your life, my dearest sister! Nor is our father's pastor going to ask him for the credentials of the lady he proposes to honour. Everybody downtown is delighted. He got a jolly from every man he saw at the Club to-day where, by the way, I was taken to show our delight in the prospect

of seeing a new face at the ancestral dinner table. So much for us males; how about the women? Are there any signs of revolt? I met Dick's mother a while ago, and she had her knife sharpened."

"Many people are still away, but my telephone has rung all day and the town's buzzing."

"It's a good thing for the town to have something that it can concentrate on for a few days. Dick Wingfield says the trouble with us here is our lack of social unification. Our approaching stepmother's advent may have the effect of concentrating social influences."

"The older women resent it; they declare they will have nothing to do with her."

"Those estimable ladies whose husbands have paper in banks where father is a director will sing a different tune this evening."

"Men don't know how we women feel about such matters; if mama had not been the woman she was it wouldn't be so hard."

"Oh, yes, it would, Fanny! Besides you don't know what sort of a woman father's going to bring home to fill our Christmas stockings."

"Please don't make it all more horrible than necessary," she cried. "It's that sort of thing, Wayne, the Christmas and the birthdays and the Sunday evenings at the piano, when she taught us to sing songs together — it's all that that hurts me."

Her eyes were bright with tears. Wayne rose and walked the length of the room.

"For God's sake, Fanny, cut all that out."

"That's what it means to me and it means even more to you. I think we made a mistake in not showing resentment when father told us. But we took it as calmly as though he had told us he had bought a new chair or a hat rack."

"You're rating the lady as a piece of furniture, which is putting it pretty high. You mustn't let Mrs. Wingfield and these other old ladies give you nervous prostration over this business. As I've already reminded you, father wasn't born yesterday; you may be sure that he is making no mistake. Very likely she has a few millions in bank for spending money. For myself, I await her coming with the liveliest anticipations."

A shadow crossed his sister's face as she listened. He had spoken harshly and she did not like the look in his eyes. She knew that he would care, but she did not know that he would care so much. He took a cigar from the tabarette at his elbow and lighted it. She studied him carefully as the match flamed. His hands were quite steady to-day, and there was an air of assurance about him that puzzled her deeply. He blew a smoke-ring and threw out his arms to shake down his cuffs.

"Does anyone know a thing about the woman? Have you found out anything?"

"That question, my dear sister, has been asked many times in the Greater City to-day, and the answer has been, so far as I know, an emphatic negative. But so much the better. If the gossips have nothing to work on they can't do much. The

fact of the woman being unknown is nothing; it's all in her favour. Mrs. Craighill, with her faint background of New Hampshire — or is it Vermont? — her long sojourns abroad and all that, will strike town with a clean bill of health. I tell you father is wise in his generation. No old bones to pick. The woman will come into camp as fresh and new as her trousseau."

"I couldn't say anything the other night when father told us, but now that the newspapers have done their worst it seems like the end of everything," sighed Mrs. Blair.

"To me," said Wayne musingly, "it is only the beginning. We had been travelling in a hard rut. I had become immensely bored with the family life. Now we shall see the vista broaden and lengthen. My curiosity is on edge. My father's wife — ah, the thought of it! I am at her feet; I crave her blessing! Your point of view is all wrong, dear sister. We must put such feelings aside; our duty, Fanny, is not to the dead but to the living."

"Wayne! Wayne! Will you stop? You are not yourself; it's not like you to talk so."

"My dear Fanny," he persisted, flicking the ash from his cigar, "if in intimating that I am not myself you imply that I have been drinking I will say to you that you never did me a greater wrong. Not only have I had no form of drink to-day but our own chaste river water, but it may interest you to know that I have cut out the whiskey when it is red altogether. I scorn it; I put it away forever. I

signalize our father's marriage by renouncing drink. Will you not congratulate me?"

"I don't understand you. It is not like you to talk this way."

She was mystified, and stared at him with dry eyes, wondering.

"You don't seem impressed by my reformation; maybe you don't believe I can quit! I tell you, Fanny, the Blotter will soak up the blithesome cocktail no more. When the new Mrs. Roger Craighill comes she shall find me the most abstemious person in town. My friends — and I still have one or two — will be incredulous and amazed; my enemies will express regret; the kind who have robbed me when I've been loaded will miss an income that has been as sure as taxes. I have already committed myself to father, and he expressed himself with his habitual reserve as delighted."

Mrs. Blair rose and changed her seat to get nearer him; her mystification grew. There was a bitter undernote that belied his surface lightness.

"Wayne, there is something I want you to do: I want you to move out of father's house; I don't want you to stay after this woman comes."

"But, Fanny, I've promised father to remain! Can't you see what a lot of gossip would be caused by my leaving? Think of the embarrassment and annoyance to father! Here we should have a realization of the old joke about the cruel stepmother and the incorrigible, brow-beaten son, driven from home! I tell you, father is no child; he has

foreseen exactly that possibility, as he foresees all possibilities. He is vain of his prophetic vision; you can't lose father, I tell you!"

"But after a few weeks," she pleaded, "when the town has got used to her being here, you will have settled all that and you can make some plausible excuse for leaving. You can come here and live with us. John would be only too glad."

"To leave after a few months would certainly look bad; and it's the look of the thing that interests father. No; he has asked me to stay, and I'm going to stay. Besides, my dear Fanny, shall I kick myself from my own doorstep? You must remember that the house is mine. Mother wanted it that way; she had a sentiment about it."

"Yes; the house will be yours when father dies; but while he lives it is his. I wish you hadn't mentioned that; it makes the whole matter more hideous. The very ground was dear to mother; the coming of this other woman is a profanation."

Wayne put down his cigar and stood before his sister, who sat crumpled in her seat playing nervously with her handkerchief.

"See here, Fanny; there's no use in being hysterical about this business. We'd better grin and accept the situation. Believe the worst: that father has been trapped by an adventuress; we've got a little pride of our own, I hope! On the other hand, she may prove a perfectly delightful person."

"I don't see how you can say such things," she moaned.

"It's remarkable how much faith you women have in one another. You trust one another about as far as you could push a mountain in a wheelbarrow. Why should you condemn her before she has a chance to speak for herself? Put yourself in her place!"

He smiled at his own nobility. His sister was not heeding him, but Wayne had really a great deal of influence with her; and he went on to discuss the matter in its more practical aspects, which had been the object of his coming and her own intention. He defended his father for excluding them from the ceremony itself; he persuaded her that it was better so, just as his father had said. Fanny Blair did not often strike her colours, but the strain of the day, with its incessant telephoning, and the daring of intimate friends who had sought her out with the effect, at least, of bringing the daily newspapers in their hands for confirmation, had told upon her. When Wayne pleased he could be helpful; and they were soon discussing quite calmly the series of entertainments which Mrs. Blair had already planned. She even laughed at Wayne's comments on some of the combinations she proposed for two or three dinners which were designed to give the older friends of the family an opportunity to inspect the bride immediately.

"Get the old stagers first; that's the card to play, for we are an old and conservative family. Your dance, reception and tea will bring in the other elements; but the dinner is more intimate, and offers better hypnotic possibilities."

"She's more likely to paralyze than hypnotize. Her face in that picture has haunted me, Wayne."

"Ah! I knew it would come! You already feel her spell. So do I!"

She rose and peered into his face searchingly, laying her hands on his shoulders.

"Wayne, I believe you know that woman! Play fair with me about this; have you ever seen her? Have you ever heard of her before?"

"Fanny, how absurd you are! You asked me that question before and I answered no. Do you imagine I have seen her to-day? Come now, please be the reasonable little sister you always have been. You are the brightest, cleverest, dearest girl in the world. That gown is a dream, if you ask me; you should be painted by Alexander for the family portrait gallery. Dick Wingfield suggested to father to-day his own duty in the matter and I see the finished product — father full-length in a frock coat, with his hand resting lightly on a volume of his own speeches."

Mrs. Blair's eyes filled with tears.

"Poor mama!" she mourned. "I'm glad *her* portrait was painted just when it was — the picture is so dear. I'm going to get it out of the house before that creature comes if it's the last thing I do."

"Please, Fanny, don't do that," he pleaded, touched in his own heart more than he wished her to know. "Come, now, cheer up, for I must trot if I get home for dinner. I promised father to be there; it's close upon our last tête-à-tête. Count

on me for all your functions. I'll get Wingfield to support me at the teas and so on. If you want me to come to your antiquarians' dinner I shall be here and you may place me next the solemnest dowager you invite to the banquet. You needn't go on a cold-water basis for the occasion either; my glasses shall be turned down; remember that!"

"I'm glad, oh, so glad, Wayne! I can't tell you what that means to me."

She stood in the doorway and watched him slip into his topcoat. He moved with the athlete's ease; there was a real grace in him. He had never been so dear to her sisterly heart as now, in the light of this new event before which they waited. For sister-love goes far and deep. Like charity, it suffereth long and is kind. In self-effacement and service it is happiest; and it knows the pangs of neglect and jealousy. Fanny's eyes were upon Wayne in love and admiration as she watched him fasten his coat and draw on his gloves.

"By the way, Fanny, that was a stunning girl you had in there when I came. I caught a glimpse of her against those dark red curtains — a very pleasing portrait if I'm asked!"

"She has known trouble, poor child; I'm doing what I can to help her."

"That's like you, Fanny."

"She's very interesting; she has a lot of talent."

"If you need help in advancing her cause you may call on me," he said lightly, but she knew him so well that she fathomed his serious wish to know

about her protégée. He had taken up his hat, but lingered expectantly. "I saw her in the art gallery to-day, and she's certainly unusual. I wish you would introduce me to her!"

Mrs. Blair had not been prepared for the directness of his request. Her figure stiffened; she must be on guard against the joy in him that had filled her heart.

"I know the way round at the Institute and I might be of service to her," he said carelessly, but she knew that he was deeply interested — women always interested him — and she saw no way at the moment of putting him off.

"I can't, Wayne."

"I should like to know why not?" and he laughed as he balanced his hat by its brim in his hands. She usually yielded readily to any of his requests and he was surprised that she parleyed now.

"I can't; I mustn't; and please, Wayne, don't make any effort to find out who she is. I beg you not to; I don't want you to know her," she ended, with pleading in her voice and eyes.

His face clouded and he turned to the door and opened it. Then he flung round upon her roughly:

"My God, Fanny; have I sunk as low as that!"

She stepped into the vestibule and watched him striding through the shrubbery toward the gate. She pressed her face to the glass of the vestibule doors, shielding her eyes from the overhead light with her hands as she looked after him. She always made a point of sending him away happy when she

could; and now he had left her in anger. She still watched him after he had left the grounds and passed into the street, walking slower than was his wont, and with his head bowed. The curious mood in which he was accepting his father's marriage still distressed her; and his declaration that he had given up drink had carried no real conviction, now that she pondered his words and manner. She waited until an opening through the trees gave her a last glimpse of him across the hedge under the electric light at the corner, then with a deep sigh she turned into the house.

When, a little later, he called her on the telephone and begged her not to mind anything he had said on leaving — his usual way of making peace after their occasional tiffs — she was only half relieved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMING OF MRS. CRAIGHILL

"MY promptness deserves a better cause!" exclaimed Mrs. Blair as she stepped from her motor at the entrance to the railway station, where Wayne in his father's car had arrived but a moment earlier. Mrs. Blair had brought down her two children, and these in their smart fall coats were still protesting against the haste with which they had been snatched from their beds and dressed in their Sunday clothes; but their faces brightened at the sight of their uncle, upon whom they fell clamorously with a demand to be taken into the train sheds to see the locomotives. Wayne was more amiable than his sister had seen him since their father gave the first warning of his marriage. He chaffed the children and promised to take them to a football game the next Saturday if they would let him off as to the engines; and when they were appeased he held up for his sister's inspection the morning papers, with their first-page account of the marriage in New York the preceding day.

"'Simplicity marked all the arrangements,'" he read. "'Only the bride's mother and the necessary witnesses were present — dined very quietly at Sherry's — scarce noted in the fashionable throng

of the great dining-room — Colonel Craighill's private car attached to the Pittsburg Flyer' — and so on," and Wayne shook out the paper to display the portraits of Colonel and Mrs. Craighill and a view of the Craighill home.

The picture of the house evoked an exclamation of disgust from Mrs. Blair.

"Oh, Wayne, they might have spared us that! The house — it hurts worse than anything else. It's sacrilege — it isn't fair."

Wayne folded the paper and thrust it into his pocket to get it out of her sight.

"Now, Sis, you've got to cheer up. You're looking bullier than ever this morning. Those clothes must have eaten a hole in John's checkbook. It's rather nasty of John not to come down and face the music with you."

"John couldn't; he simply couldn't," she declared defensively.

"Wouldn't, you mean! John Blair is not a man to get up to meet his wife's relations on an early train if he can duck it. But the kids help out a lot. They're a charming feature of the morning. You ought to have taught them to sing a carol and scatter flowers as grandpapa comes through the gates leading their new grandmama by the hand. It would have been nuts for those reporters over there with the camera men."

"No; you don't mean that *they* are here!" she gasped.

He indicated with a nod several men and two

women waiting near the news-stand. They carried cameras and were watching Wayne and his sister with interest.

"The women are the society reporters; they're going to do this thing right. Mrs. Craighill's coming-home gown will be described in proper dry-goods language; no blundering male eye for this job!"

"How perfectly horrible! I wish I hadn't brought the children if we're all to get into the papers."

"Brace up! You can't flinch now. Besides, there's the train!"

He led the way out of the waiting room and into the train-shed as the New York express rolled heavily in.

The private car was at the end of the train and before they reached it Colonel Craighill's children saw his tall figure in the vestibule. Their eyes, were, however, upon the lady behind him, whose hat and coat had already been appraised by Mrs. Blair in that sharp *coup d' oeil* by which one woman dissects the garb of another. The porter jumped out with his arms filled with hand baggage, and as Colonel Craighill stepped sedately forth, Mrs. Blair's arms were at once about her father's neck. For an instant there was a sob in her throat, but she stifled it and her hands were immediately extended to her father's wife, who hesitated upon the car steps.

"Fanny, this is my wife, Adelaide. Good morning, Wayne!"

"Welcome home!" cried Mrs. Blair bravely, and

seized the lady's hands nervously in her own. Then with a sudden impulse, as though to complete, beyond any criticism, her acceptance of the newcomer, she kissed her stepmother on the cheek.

"You are just my height, aren't you!" she exclaimed, stepping back.

Wayne waited hat in hand, smiling.

"Adelaide, this is my son, Wayne!"

"Good morning! I am glad to see you," said Wayne, bowing over Mrs. Craighill's hand; and as he raised his head their eyes met with, it seemed, a particular inquiry and plea in hers.

"I'll attend to the baggage. Give me your checks, father."

It was over, this first meeting between Colonel Craighill's wife and her husband's children. As they walked through the waiting room there was a click of cameras. Other eyes than Mrs. Blair's had already noted the new Mrs. Craighill's outlines, and the films in the newspaper cameras had recorded a trim, graceful figure of medium height, a well-set head, crowned with a pretty toque, and a light travelling coat of unimpeachable cut.

In the waiting room the Blair boys were presented, while their mother watched the meeting critically. A slight to her children, an indifference to their charm would have been fatal; but Mrs. Craighill bent to them graciously. She had even remembered their names, and applied them correctly. The lads suffered themselves to be kissed and were thereupon sent home in the Blair motor.

Colonel Craighill had asked Mrs. Blair to come to his house for breakfast, and they were all soon seated in his car, which the chauffeur drove slowly, so that Colonel Craighill might point out to his wife features of the urban landscape that struck him as particularly interesting. As the rise of the boulevard lifted them out of the commercial district, the dark cloud that brooded above the rivers gave Colonel Craighill an opportunity to introduce his wife, with a wave of the hand, to the prodigious industries which thus advertised themselves upon the very sky. He was at the point of quoting the enormous tonnages to which the ironmongery of the region ran; but Mrs. Blair thwarted him.

"Adelaide!" she cried. "There! Did you see how naturally I spoke your name the first time! I may call you that, mayn't I?"

The two ladies clasped hands, while Colonel Craighill smiled upon them in benignant approval.

"I was going to call attention to that speck of soot that has just settled on your nose — your first!" Mrs. Blair continued. "Ah! there you have it now!" she concluded as Mrs. Craighill found the offender with her handkerchief.

"That, we may say, marks your baptism into full citizenship," beamed Colonel Craighill.

As the residential area unfolded itself, he named the owners of many of the houses they were passing, while Mrs. Blair summarized their history in short, amusing phrases. Wayne, sitting on the front seat, turned his head to throw in a word now and then;

but for the greater part he kept his own counsel. He overheard his sister's rapid survey of the social geography of the Greater City. She declared that there was no debating the claims of the East End to social supremacy, though there were what she called "nice people" in the red brick homes of transpontine Allegheny. "Dick Wingfield," she quoted, "always says that in crossing the river, Charon and not the bridge company gets the fee. Dick calls the river the Stygian wave." Mrs. Blair was not sure that Mrs. Craighill quite took this in, but it did not matter in one who smiled responsively at everything and appeared anxious to please.

There was the usual difficulty in explaining to a stranger the triangular shape of the city clasped by its two rivers that so quickly flow as one, and the fact that you may, if you like, take a boat here for New Orleans if you are bent upon adventure. "Are there suburbs?" Mrs. Craighill asked; and rising to this prompting Mrs. Blair flashed an illuminating glance upon Stanwixley, where, she conceded, there were delightful people, but why they should live where they did was beyond her powers of understanding. Colonel Craighill protested now and then, but smilingly, as one who would, at the fitting moment, pronounce the final word in all such matters. Greater philosophers than Fanny Blair have found it difficult to hit off in a few phrases the social alignments of the Greater City. Where there is no centre, no common and unifying social expression,

it is not easy to find a point of departure. Even the *terra sancta* of the East End presents no stern walls to the newcomer who can provide himself with a house and a chef. And it is not correct to speak of social strata in the City of the Iron Heart, for the term implies depth, and the life here at this period was wholly superficial, a thing of geography and cliques, the one fairly rigid, the other unstable and shifting. But these were the Years of the Great Prosperity, a time of broad social readjustments and generous inclusion. Poverty alone, we may say, enforces the rules of exact social differentiation; there has never been in America any society so scrupulous, proud and sensitive as that of the Southern cavaliers when they threw off their armour and returned to their despoiled estates.

It did not seem possible during these bountiful years that the wolf would ever yelp in the steep cañons of the Greater City, or that steel, iron and coal could ever less magically change to gold. It was, indeed, inconceivable that the prosperous citizens would not forever disport themselves in the glittering hotels of New York and go on discovering, like so many Columbuses, the delights of London and Paris. Nowhere were these Midases more in evidence than on the transatlantic steamers, where their millions were computed in awed whispers by less favoured travellers and the stewards danced with unwonted alacrity in the confident hope of largess.

"It's our American habit" — Colonel Craighill

was saying — "and not a bad trait, to believe our own state and our own city and our own quarter of the block where we live the most ideal place in the world. And this, Adelaide, is home!"

Mrs. Blair flung off her wraps in the hall and went to the dining room to interview the maid about breakfast. She arranged with her own hands the roses she had sent for this first table, and, this accomplished to her satisfaction, she peered into the cabinet that held the best of her mother's Sevres with a lingering regret that she had not made way with it while there was yet time; for Mrs. Blair was eminently human, and women are never so weak as before the temptation to loot. She heard her father's voice above, describing to his wife the character of the upper chambers and she joined Wayne in the library where he stood in the bay window looking out upon the thinning boughs of the maples.

"Well," she exclaimed with a half sigh, "the worst is over."

"You've done bully, Fanny. You've risen to the occasion!"

"Oh, it might be worse! It might be infinitely worse. What do you think of her?"

"Oh, she's not bad! I should call her a pretty woman."

"Well, she doesn't seem to have much to say!"

"No one can, Sis, when you get going. She remarked quite distinctly that she liked summer better than winter, and I thought she did well to get that in."

"Well, she was nice to the children, anyhow," sighed Mrs. Blair, not heeding him.

Steps were heard on the stair and in a moment Mrs. Craighill entered at her husband's side.

"I hope we haven't kept you waiting. It's so good of you to stop."

"Breakfast is served always at eight o'clock," Mrs. Blair explained as they moved toward the dining room. "I was driven from my home by that rule. Father would never yield fifteen minutes even when I had been dancing all night."

Wayne drew back the chair for the new mistress of the house, and then sat down opposite his sister at the round table. All contributed a few commonplaces to the first difficult moments at the table, and Mrs. Blair took advantage of the opportunity to scrutinize the newcomer more closely. Mrs. Craighill was pretty, undeniably that; but it was a prettiness without distinction; it lay in the general effect, and in her ready smile rather than in particular features. Her hands were not to Mrs. Blair's liking; they were a trifle too broad, but even this was minimized by the woman's graceful use of them. The appearance of the coffee, which was made in a device that Wayne had set over to domestic use from the Club, brought him into the talk with his personal apologies for the absence of the silver breakfast service.

"That machine isn't so formidable as it looks. It is warranted not to blow up. But I advise you against its product, Adelaide; the brew is as fierce

as lye and will shatter the strongest nerves. Father requires water in his — about one hundred per cent. Please don't feel obliged to use that trap if you don't like it."

He had spoken her name easily, and as he mentioned it she lifted her head from the cups and smiled at him with a little nod. Mrs. Blair, observant of everything, could not, in spite of the smooth-flowing talk, forget the waste areas of her ignorance of this woman, who had slipped unchallenged into her mother's old place at the table, and whom she and Wayne were endeavouring to please. This last point touched her humour; that they, with their prior claims upon their father and the house, should be trying to impress the new wife favourably was to Fanny Blair's mind decidedly funny.

"I suppose our severest winter weather will hardly equal the cold you have been used to in Vermont," she remarked, stirring her cup.

"It gets very cold there, but it is bracing and wholesome," replied Adelaide, meeting Fanny's gaze. "But I have hardly been there since I grew up. Mama found she couldn't stand the climate about the time I needed some schooling, so we went abroad, and you know how easy it is to stay on once you are over there. Our home in Vermont was at Burlington — you know, on the lake? — and the winds do come howling terribly down from Canada! It is lovely in summer, though. I'm going to take your father up there next summer," she ended, smiling at her husband, who gazed at her fondly.

It had been some time since Mrs. Blair had heard any one speak of taking her father anywhere. Her memory pricked her at once with the recollection that in her mother's lifetime her father had yielded reluctantly to all pleas for vacations. The children had usually been taken away by their mother — sometimes to hotels at quiet summer places, at other times to houses rented for the season. Colonel Craighill did not always like the places chosen by his wife, but he had never quarrelled with her plans and decisions in such matters. He liked to travel and fell into the habit of an annual trip abroad, going usually alone, chiefly, he declared, for the sea trip. Now, however, Mrs. Blair reflected, everything would be different.

Breakfast passed smoothly, and they lingered later in the library. Mrs. Craighill seemed in no awe of her elderly husband. She talked more freely now, and mentioned many foreign places where she and her mother had lived at different periods. Most of them were obscure and unfashionable, and some of them were wholly unknown to Mrs. Blair; but she was dimly conscious that there was cleverness behind this careless sketching of the leisurely foreign itinerary pursued by this young woman and her widowed mother. At the same time the background which Mrs. Craighill created for herself was shadowy; against it she and her mother were as unsubstantial as figures on a screen. There was nothing that you could put your hand on. Vermont, to Mrs. Blair, was even

more remote and inaccessible than those French and German towns where winters and summers had been spent by the mother and daughter. Mrs. Blair, in her rapid visualization of their flights, saw them huddled where the pension charges were lightest.

Wayne soon called for his runabout and went to the office, as his father had announced that he would remain at home until after luncheon. Wayne had acted becomingly, to his father's satisfaction and to his sister's great relief. Mrs. Blair was, in fact, quite proud of him as he said good-bye to her and stood very straight and tall before his stepmother and bade her good morning. He bore the stamp of breeding — she had never felt this more than now — and he could be relied on in emergencies.

"Are you all coming over to-night — the children and everybody?" asked Colonel Craighill.

"No; you must have your first dinner alone," Mrs. Blair replied; "but to-morrow night you are coming to us."

"I am dining with Fanny to-night, so you will have a clean sweep," said Wayne, in conformity with his sister's earlier instructions.

The sensation of being suddenly established as mistress of a home over which another woman had presided for twenty years, and in which she has borne and reared children and died, was to be Mrs. Craighill's fully to-day. Mrs. Blair went thoroughly into all the domestic arrange-

ments with the housekeeper attending. She revealed the repositories of linen, the moth-proof lodgments for woollen fabrics, the secret storehouses of fruit and vegetables. On these rounds Mrs. Blair evinced a sincere desire to be of help. She had fortified herself against heartache, but there were things that hurt. The ineffaceable marks of her mother's forethought and labour were wrought into the deeper history of the house, and could never be understood by this newcomer, who laid ignorant hands upon the ark of the domestic covenant and yet escaped destruction.

Several times, on this tour of inspection, Colonel Craighill spoke his first wife's name, and his manner and tone gave to his daughter's sensitive intelligence a completer idea of his perfect detachment from the earlier tie. She felt the tightening of the heart that every woman feels when an illustration of man's forgetfulness strikes close home. She foresees at once her own replacement by another; fickle flowers of remembrance are rusty patches on her grave where the winds of December moan forever. Fanny Blair, already, by this prevision, saw herself forgotten and her own successor entering her husband's door, while her children, unkempt and tearful, wailed dolorously before the gates of oblivion.

CHAPTER IX

"HELP ME TO BE A GOOD WOMAN"

WHEN Wayne returned to the office after luncheon he looked in upon his father, who, having cleared his desk with his habitual easy dispatch, was addressing himself to the consideration of new business. Roger Craighill's desk was never littered; a few sheets of figures lay before him as he glanced over his glasses at Wayne.

"Sit down a moment. You may remember that I have wanted, for several years, to get out of the jobbing business. Now I have an offer for it that it seems best to accept. Walsh wishes to buy it."

"Walsh!" exclaimed Wayne.

"I was surprised that he should want to leave us," Colonel Craighill continued.

"I'm rather more surprised that he should be able to!" said Wayne, who saw nothing heinous in Walsh's wish to leave the office if he could do better elsewhere. It was, however, quite like his father to express amazement that a valued subordinate should desert his standard. Within a fortnight Wayne's attitude toward his father had unconsciously hardened; what once had been fitful rebellion was now stubborn revolt. In his heart, Wayne felt that his father had never appreciated Walsh, and

he hoped now, that if the silent lieutenant left, the loss would precipitate the breaking down of this complacency, this perfect self-confidence.

"Walsh has made a fair offer. He knows the business well — as well, practically, as I myself. His offer is based on the last invoice to which he adds one hundred thousand dollars for the name and good will of the house. The capitalization is just as your grandfather left it. Walsh has owned, for a number of years you remember, ten shares of the capital stock. You and I together own the rest. The few shares held by men in the office to complete the organization are all assigned to us. You have, if you remember ——"

"Twenty shares," said Wayne promptly, irritated that his father was assuming that he would not know.

"Quite right. You own twenty; I hold sixty-five; and that leaves five shares held by the clerks that are practically mine. I take it for granted that you will wish to sell your holding if I dispose of the controlling interest."

"No; I hardly think I shall," replied Wayne. "The earnings are better than they ever were, and I shouldn't know where to do so well. Besides," he added in a tone that caused his father to wince, "the business was started by Grandfather Wayne and I have always felt that I owed it to mother to keep my interest there. I suppose the corporate name will not be changed?"

"I had assumed it would not be," replied Colonel Craighill smiling. "It is a part of the assets!"

"Certainly, the Wayne-Craighill Company! As I am both a Wayne and a Craighill I prefer to stay in; I assume you don't care one way or another."

"On the other hand, I am glad to see that you have a mind of your own in the matter, and your feeling about your grandfather, the founder of the house, does you great credit, my son. It pleases me more than I can say. I should not be retiring myself if this were not in line with my plans of several years for concentrating my interests. I can use this money to better advantage elsewhere."

He did not explain how he proposed to re-invest the money derived from the sale of the jobbing business, and Wayne asked no questions. A number of men were waiting, as usual, to see Colonel Craighill, who presently took up several cards from his desk and rang for the office boy to begin admitting the callers.

Wayne had ordered Joe to bring down his runabout at four o'clock and for half an hour he idled as he waited in his own office. He came and went as he liked by the hall door in his room so that the clerks in the outer office never knew whether he was in or not.

"Home, Joe!" and he sat silently pondering until the car drew up at his father's door. As he hung up his coat he was conscious of a new expectation, a new exhilaration. His heart beat fast as he stood, listening intently, like one who is startled by an obscure sound in a lonely house and waits for its recurrence. He had gone home to see his father's

wife; he had gone expecting to find her alone, and he peered into the dim drawing room guardedly as though fearful of detection. A clock on the stair struck the half-hour and its chime, familiar from childhood, beat upon his ears jarringly, and sent confused alarms bounding through his pulses. He turned into the library and there the thronging hosts of memory that the scene summoned, steadied and sobered him as he stood within the portières. Then, as he swung round into the hall, he heard a light laugh above, and Mrs. Craighill came running down to meet him. Her step on the stair was noiseless; his pictorial sense was alive to the grace of her swift descent.

"Home so soon!"

She put out her hand and waited at the foot of the stair. A rose-coloured house-gown, whose half-sleeves disclosed her arms from the elbow, seemed to diffuse a glow about her. He stood staring and unsmiling where her laugh had first arrested him until she spoke again.

"I didn't know I was so forbidding as all that!" she said and walked past him into the library. She found a seat and he threw himself into a chair a little distance away from her. They looked at each other intently, he grave and sullen, she smiling.

"Well, you did it!" he said presently.

"Please!"

She turned with her lips pouting prettily and glanced over her shoulder. "Please be nice to me!"

"You haven't changed your tricks; you don't have

to beg admiration, so cut it all out. What if I had stopped it?"

"Well, you didn't — though I gave you your chance."

"You needn't give me credit for too much generosity. I was on a spree and didn't get your letter until the trap was well sprung, and, besides, the name threw me off. It was only when the Colonel showed me your photograph, carried sacredly in his pocket, that I knew who you were. How's your dear mama?"

"For once in her life I think she's satisfied; she's gone abroad, thank heaven!"

"Now that you're fixed I suppose she will do something on her own account. She's a wonder, that mother of yours."

"Mama has her ambitions," Mrs. Craighill observed pensively.

"Her greed, you mean. How did you get on with Fanny this morning?"

"Your sister's a dear! I'm quite in love with her; she was perfectly lovely to me — kind as could be and anxious to be helpful. I'm already very fond of her."

"I daresay your affections will include the whole family before you get through with us."

This meeting was not to his taste. He had taken advantage of the first opportunity to be alone with his father's wife, and now that they were together he was failing to give the right tone to the interview. It was proving disagreeable and he did not know

how to change its key. It irritated him to find that Mrs. Craighill was calmly giving it direction.

"Wayne, dear," she said, her arm thrown over the back of her low chair, "you came home to see me and now you are not a bit nice."

"I came home because it's home," he replied doggedly.

"But you haven't been home at this hour within the memory of anybody on the place. I asked the maids — very discreetly — what time Mr. Wayne came home and they were embarrassed. You cut the Club for me this afternoon; I'm not going to have it any other way."

He rose and walked the length of the room, and when he had gained the bay window he looked back at her. She did not move and her head, the pretty arch of her neck, the graceful lines of her figure brought him quickly to her side. He took her hands roughly and drew her to her feet.

"Yes, I came home when I did to see you alone," he cried eagerly. "You knew I would come; you counted on it; you were sure of it!"

"What a mind reader you are!" she laughed, looking languidly up at him.

He clasped her hands in both his own, and peered into her face. Her eyes questioned him long; they held him away from her as though by physical force. Then the colour surged suddenly in her face and throat as he bent toward her lips and she cried out softly and freed herself.

"No! No! Not like that!"

"There is no other way. You didn't think you could come here and begin all over again and live under the same roof with me and have me forget! I tell you I am not brass or wood! No woman was ever so much to any man as you are to me. If I had not been a fool you would have belonged to me; and now, now you are here and we cannot be less to each other than we were once. You know that; I know it!"

She was looking at him questioningly, with a wide-eyed gravity, and she was very white. She lifted her head slightly, as though by the act summoning her own courage, and took a step that brought her close to him; she laid her hands on his shoulders.

"Wayne, I want you to help me — I want you to help me to be a good woman."

Her pallour had deepened; her lips trembled; the tears shone in her eyes.

"Why did you come here? If you wanted my help you took a strange way of getting it. It strikes me that the reason you came is something that we had better not go into."

"That is not like you, Wayne. I suppose — I suppose — it would not occur to you that I admire and love your father; that, after the life I have led, the shelter of such a home as this and the protection of such a man mean more than I know how to describe. I haven't the words to tell you what it means!" she ended with a little moan, and then: "It was only chance that threw me again in your way."

"I'm not so sure of that," he replied harshly. "I think your mother must have chuckled to herself at finding that she could catch the father if she couldn't land the more sophisticated son. She thought she was taking revenge on me. Those are nice things you have" — his eye swept her gown — "and if your mother has gone abroad it's a fair assumption that she tapped the Craighill till pretty soon after the wedding — if not just before!"

"You have no right to make such insinuations. It's infamous. I don't intend that you shall insult me under this roof."

"Under this roof!" he mocked.

"Oh, I understand that it's yours; that when your father dies it will belong to you; but while he lives it's my shelter, it's my home; the first, Wayne, that I ever had."

He studied her with a puzzled look in his eyes. He had thought he knew her; that out of his earlier knowledge he could readily establish a new tie. The thought of this had filled his mind from the moment he had recognized her photograph at his father's table.

"What I ask you for, Wayne, what I beg you to give me, is my chance. I have never had it yet. I have been hawked about and offered in a good many markets. I might have been married to you if mama had not counted too little on your sanity and tried to get money out of you before she had you well hooked. It is possible that I was a little

— just a little slow at the game. I let you escape — I could have held you if I had wanted to — and I suffered for it afterward. You may be sure she punished me for that."

"I dare say she did," he muttered, watching her.

"If it hadn't been that I really cared for you, Wayne, I think I should have gone ahead. You thought you were eluding me; the fact is that I precipitated that row myself to give you your chance to get away. The mater wanted to follow you into the courts; I stopped that by burning your letters and declining to give any aid."

"Ha! my benefactress, you are discovered!"

"No, that is not the tone for you to take with me, Wayne. I have no intention of asking favours. I think," and she pondered gravely as though anxious to be exact, "I believe I realize the enormity of what I have done perfectly, and I ask forgiveness mercy, kindness. I have bought my freedom, and I want to be sure I shall have it — and peace. Oh, peace, decency; to stop being a vagabond, flung in the eyes of every man suspected of having money! That mother of mine didn't sell me at the last; I made the bargain. And now that I bear your father's name I am not going to dishonour it; I am not going to bring any cloud upon his old age, no disgrace and no shame. There is no nobler man in the world than he is, and as far as I can, with my poor, miserable, hideous past, and my poor wits, I am going to try to live up to him. There is just that one prayer in my heart — after all these tempta-

tions, and heartache, heartache, heartache! — that I may be a good woman — a good woman, Wayne! What a wonderful thing it would be if I could — goodness, with peace!"

Her voice was low and failed wholly now and then and he found himself watching her lips to read the words that his ears lost. He had been rejoicing in the thought that his father was the victim of a vulgar connivance between an avaricious and designing woman and a willing and not too scrupulous daughter; and the situation was one which he had counted upon playing with in his own fashion. The gossamer web of this hope now fluttered broken on the wind. In the silence that followed he saw for an instant the ignoble and shameful aspect of the thing that had been in his heart. Then a new idea flashed upon him; it was base, base enough to satisfy even this stubborn mood in which Mrs. Craighill's appeal had left him. He felt a joy in his cunning; his heart warmed as the anger and resentment against his father took form again. The conquest was not to be so easy as he had imagined, but it would be all the sweeter for delay. Vengeance for wrongs and injustices might yet be secured. He experienced a thrill of gratification that his mind had responded to this need in defeat. His imagination built up a new tower of possibilities upon a fresh foundation: it was this new wife who had been deceived in the marriage, not his father! He would gain in the end what he sought and the blow at his father should lose nothing

of its force when strengthened by her disappointment and humiliation. It was inconceivable that Roger Craighill would ever treat the woman as an equal; that there could ever be any real sympathy between them. With all the zest of youth in her, and with her love of life, she was sure to seek escape from the bleak zone he, as Roger Craighill's son, knew well, but whose far-lying levels she now saw rosy with promise.

Mrs. Craighill had not looked at Wayne through the latter part of her recital and appeal; but she rose now and turned to him smilingly. She wore an air, indeed, of having defined an unassailable position; of having fully mastered its defense, with her own soul supreme in the citadel. Her confidence revealed itself in her voice as she addressed him; he was piqued to find that she apparently dismissed him a little condescendingly, as though their future relations were established on a basis determined by herself and that there was no question of maintaining them there.

"Good-bye, Wayne, I must run along now to dress for dinner. You dine with Fanny, don't you? Please tell your sister how much I appreciate her kindness this morning; and I am grateful for yours, too, Wayne!"

He rose as she put out her hand. He looked at her fixedly as though her identity were suddenly in question. Then he laughed softly.

"Good-bye, Addie!"

He followed her into the hall. She did not look

back at him, but went slowly up the stair with a dignity that was new in her. It was as though she wore her new wifehood as a protecting shield and cloak.

When he heard her door close he went up to his own room.

CHAPTER X

MR. WALSH MEETS MRS. CRAIGHILL

WINGFIELD was mistaken when he announced at the Allequippa Club, apropos of Walsh's purchase of a controlling interest in the Wayne-Craighill Company, that Roger Craighill had never appreciated Walsh's services. Colonel Craighill not only valued Walsh highly, but he took occasion to express, in a statement given to the newspapers, his "deep sense of loss upon the retirement of my faithful chief of staff, who after years of painstaking labour, reaps the reward of his own industry and fidelity." More than this, Colonel Craighill made Walsh's passing the occasion for a dinner to all the employees in his office and to the managers of the mines and coking plants in which he was interested. Walsh was thus used as an illustration of the qualities that make for honourable success. This banquet, provided at a leading hotel toward the end of October, was memorable on many accounts, and not least for the address delivered to the company by the head of the table — an utterance marked by noble sentiment and expressing the highest ideals of conduct in commercial life. Wingfield characterized this somewhat coarsely as "hot air" when he

read it in the newspapers; the Colonel was, he averred, the Prince of the Platitudinous.

"The Colonel thinks he is looking through the windows of his soul upon Humanity," remarked Wingfield to a shrewd, skilful occulist with whom he shared such heresies; "but the windows of his soul are all mirrors." But Wingfield was almost the only man in town who refused to accept Roger Craighill at rather more than face value.

Wayne, glancing a few days later at Mrs. Blair's list of persons to be invited to her reception in their stepmother's honour, suggested that Walsh ought to be asked.

"Why Walsh?" asked Mrs. Blair bluntly. "When I pass him in the park driving his beautiful horses and with a long black cigar in his mouth, he makes me shudder."

"When he takes up a list of accounts payable and runs his eye down the column, all the people who owe money anywhere on earth shudder. He's a sphinx, but I like him. He's been mighty good to me and if you don't mind I'll say that he will be missed at the office more than the Colonel knows."

"Oh, tush, Wayne! Father has always said that no man is indispensable, and he wouldn't have lost Walsh if he had needed him. Father's proud that an old subordinate can go out of the office into a business of his own."

"Maybe," persisted Wayne, "maybe Walsh isn't the subordinate."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Walsh has been, far more than the Colonel knows, the *deus ex machina* of our affairs. Father has not known the details of his various interests for years — not since I went into the office. He sees only the results and, thanks to Walsh, they have been very satisfactory. When there was a nasty trip to take in a hurry to head off a strike, or to see why we weren't making the usual tonnages, old Walsh slipped out of town and looked after it without a word. Father thinks he did it all; probably thinks it honestly; and Walsh let him think it. That's Walsh's way. When father went out in his private car and found all the properties in bang-up shape he thought he was looking at the results of his own management; but in fact Walsh's eagle eye and iron grip had done the real work."

"You mustn't talk so of father, Wayne; you have grown bitter toward him and can't judge him fairly. But if you think Mr. Walsh ought to be asked to the reception I'll send him a card. There isn't any Mrs. Walsh, I believe?"

"No. He's married happily to his horses and cigars. Don't take this too hard; Walsh has never manifested any interest in social fusses yet and he'll hardly begin now. I can't see him in a dress suit! He won't come to your party but it would be decent to send him a ticket."

"Certainly, Wayne; not because Mr. Walsh has been father's brains but because you ask it."

"Oh, never mind that! Walsh has always been bully to me. I'm keeping my stock in the mer-

cantile company just because I like him. When we closed that deal the other day and I told Tom I was going to hold on to my stock he came as near being affected as I suppose is possible in such a hardy old plant. The name of the corporation isn't to be changed and he said he hoped I'd come to see him occasionally to help his credit. He was really a good deal tickled over it."

The Blair house lent itself well to large entertainments. At ten o'clock the hostess breathed a sigh of relief, knowing that her party was a success. The representative people of the Greater City were there. Men and women who, in Mrs. Blair's phrase, "stood for something," had passed in review before Mrs. Roger Craighill. Mrs. Blair was catholic-minded in social matters. The wide advertisement of her city through the coarse social exploits of some of her citizens during the Great Prosperity had aroused her bitter resentment, and she had summoned for this occasion many who, able to declare themselves guiltless of wealth, proved in their own lives and aspirations that something besides vulgarity and greed emerge from the seething caldron to which the Greater City may be likened. It was Mrs. Blair's delight to discover, and as far as lay in her power, to stimulate and reward ambition in the arts and sciences. She had promoted the fortunes of a long line of young physicians, placing them on hospital boards and sending them influential patients. Poor artists were sure to find sitters

if she took them up; the young girl seeking countenances to immortalize in miniature would, if satisfactorily weighed in Mrs. Blair's balance, find herself embarrassed with clients. John McCandless Blair could never tell, when he went home to dinner, what new musical genius would be enthroned in the music room — young men in flowing black scarfs, or, rather more delectable, young girls of just the right type to look well at the harp, and who, no matter what strains might be evoked by their fingers, yet possessed in the requisite degree what Mrs. Blair capitalized as Soul.

Mrs. Blair's reception drew a wide circle within which Mrs. Craighill made the acquaintance of her husband's fellow-townsmen. Curiosity proved stronger in most cases than fealty to the dead, even among the first Mrs. Craighill's friends. The obvious answer to any invidious question as to the wife's previous history was that a man standing as high as Colonel Craighill, and as careful as he of his honour and good name, was unlikely to make a marriage that would jeopardize his position.

There were, however, absences that expressed the resentment of certain old friends of the family who had, in Mrs. Blair's phrase, "taken a stand." These were fewer than Mrs. Blair had hoped for but Mrs. Wingfield did not appear; the pastor emeritus of Memorial Church, a gentleman who had been favoured by fortune and was in no wise dependent on Craighill patronage, had declined earlier an invitation to dine and a request for the honour of his

presence at the reception; and a retired general of the army, who sat with Roger Craighill among the elders of Memorial, not only scorned these overtures but expressed discreetly his feeling that the marriage had been an act of disloyalty to the Craighill children. There were not more than half a dozen of these instances, and while they were not, to be sure, of great importance, Mrs. Blair magnified their significance and took pains to thank the absentees later for their attitude. Dick Wingfield, keen in such matters, found upon analysis that those who, like his own mother, rejected the newcomer, were persons who had nothing whatever to lose by incurring the disfavour of Roger Craighill. His mother was rich and an independent spirit if ever one existed; the old minister's income could not be disturbed by Roger Craighill or anyone else; the retired general had, as a lieutenant, invested his scant savings in Omaha and Seattle town lots, and checks from Washington were only an incident of his income. Nobody, in fact, whom Roger Craighill could possibly reach, no one likely to need his help in any way whatever, had joined in this tame rebellion.

Wingfield, not easily astonished by anything, was nevertheless amazed to meet Walsh at Mrs. Blair's reception. He imagined that he knew Walsh pretty well, but their acquaintance had been a matter of contact at the Club, warmed into friendliness during a period in which Wingfield had, as he put it, "affected horse." Wingfield was looking for the youngest débutante when he came upon Walsh

stolidly smoking in the Blair library. Walsh in a white waistcoat was something new under the sun. It occurred to Wingfield that he had never seen him in any one's house before. He stopped to smoke a cigarette that he might, if possible, analyze Walsh's emotions in this alien air.

"So you've quit the Colonel — taken over the Wayne-Craighill Company. If you have any stock to sell I'd like to have a slice. I've always thought the grocery business must be entertaining. Its ethnological relations would appeal to me. I understand that these people who pile themselves on our social dump — the riff-raff of Europe — bring their delectable appetites with them, and that your cellars are as savoury as a Chinese stinkpot with the bouquet of finnan haddie and such epicurean delights. So Wayne's going to stay in, is he?"

Walsh took the cigar from his mouth and nodded.

"Yes; Wayne's vice-president of the company now."

"That's good. You and I are the only people hereabouts who really appreciate Wayne. There are things that Wayne can do."

Walsh nodded again. He settled himself back in his chair comfortably and looked at Wingfield with liking. A bronze Buddha, a striking item of the lares and penates of the Blair home, gazed down upon them benevolently.

"Wayne," said Walsh deliberately, "was born to be a man of power. He was built for big transactions."

Wingfield was surprised into silence. He had

never before heard Walsh express himself as to the character of any man and there was something akin to heartiness in this endorsement of Wayne Craighill. Wingfield forgot his quest of the débutante in his eagerness to hear the inscrutable Walsh's opinions. Fearing that he might relapse into one of the silences for which he was famous, Wingfield applied the prod.

"The Colonel never understood Wayne," he remarked leadingly.

"That is possible," replied Walsh, after a moment of deliberation.

"Wayne could do anything he wanted to — lead forlorn hopes, command a battleship, preach a sermon, run a coal mine, or sell a gold brick. The Scotch in him is pretty sound yet. He's a free spender, but he has his thrifty side.

"Um — yes. Wayne has brains."

"Why don't you take him in hand, Walsh, and teach him how to work?"

After a prolonged silence Walsh asked dryly:

"Why?"

"Because the Colonel has failed at it."

The two men looked at each other fixedly for a moment.

"He tried hard enough. He's disappointed in Wayne."

Walsh spoke as though he were repeating an accepted opinion rather than voicing his own thought. Wingfield caught him up.

"It pleases the Colonel to think that he possesses

anything as well authenticated as a thankless child. The serpent's tooth tickles the Colonel's vanity. Resignation becomes the Colonel like a pale lavender necktie."

"He may work his way out. Marriage might help him."

"That's not so easy. A bad marriage would send him clear to the bottom. You've got to find a particular sort of girl for his case."

"I agree with you. The girls that are here to-night — the pretty daughters of best families — that kind would be no good for him; and besides, they're not going to try it. Their papas and mamas wouldn't let them if they wanted to."

Wingfield was delighted to hear these expressions from Walsh. It was as though the sphinx, breaking the silence of centuries, had suddenly bent down and addressed a chance traveller on the topics of the day. Walsh spoke, moreover, with the quiet conviction of one who had thought deeply on the subject under discussion.

"You are quite right. I agree with you fully!" declared Wingfield, anxious to hear further from Walsh. "It would take a plucky girl to tackle Wayne."

"Brains, common sense, patience! A good, sensible working-girl would be my choice."

Walsh stroked his bald pate with his hand, and drew deeply upon his cigar. Wingfield was pondering Walsh's words carefully, fully appreciating the flattery of the old fellow's unwonted loquacity.

"How are we going to find her?"

"We are not going to find her. Wayne's a lucky devil — such fellows are usually lucky — and his future must take care of itself."

"So our prince must marry a pauper, the girl behind the glove counter, the angel whose nimble digits gambol merrily upon the typewriter, the low-voiced houri who trifles with the world's good nature in the telephone exchange? Wayne is fastidious. How are you going to arrange the time and the place and the loved one altogether?" demanded Wingfield.

"I'm not a fool, Mr. Wingfield; I'm not going to arrange it at all! I'd look pretty in the matchmaking business," concluded Walsh grimly.

"No; I guess not," smiled Wingfield; but he was startled by Walsh's next statement, delivered quietly and with his cigar in his mouth.

"I could hardly qualify as an expert on marriage, having failed at it myself."

Walsh's tone forbade inquiry. He had opened a door into some dark chamber of his past, then closed it tight and shot the bolt back into place. He rose, clumsily and lumberingly, and dropped his cigar into an ash tray. The long, blank surface of his bald head wrinkled as his brows lifted, and his eyes widened as though fixed on a horizon against which he had glimpsed the familiar outlines of some wave-washed and hopeless argosy. By a common impulse the men clasped hands silently.

"An election bet or what?" cried Mrs. Blair in the doorway. "With all the trouble there is about getting men, I should like to know what you two

mean by hobnobbing here by yourselves. I shall punish you for this, Mr. Walsh, by making you take me in to supper."

The guests were being served in the dining room and in the hall and conservatory adjoining. Mrs. Blair convoyed Walsh to a corner where Mrs. Craighill was seated at a table with the solidest bank president of the Greater City. This person was, however, slightly deaf, and as Mrs. Blair rose frequently, in her office of hostess, to assure herself of the comfort of the others who were straying in for supper, Walsh found opportunity for speech with Mrs. Craighill, whom he had observed only passingly in the drawing room.

"This is the most hospitable place! Everyone is so very kind," murmured Mrs. Craighill.

"I suppose so," replied Walsh, his glance falling upon Roger Craighill, who was relating an anecdote to a circle of wrapt listeners near by. The financier was intent upon his salad, and Mrs. Craighill gave her whole attention to Walsh.

"Colonel Craighill has told me a great deal about you, Mr. Walsh. Let me see what it was that he said — you know how splendidly he puts everything — he said, 'Mr. Walsh is a born trustee; you can trust him with anything.' "

"Those are strong words," said Walsh, meeting her gaze quietly.

"But you are leaving him, and he is very glad when any of his men go away from him to do better for themselves. He feels that it's a credit to him.

I suppose it's like the pride the colleges take in a successful graduate."

Here obviously was an opportunity for Walsh to follow her line of thought and speak in praise of his alma mater; but he switched the subject abruptly.

"You are a stranger here, Mrs. Craighill?"

"Yes, I was! But I'm beginning to feel at home already. I suppose it will take me years to learn everything about this wonderful city."

"I have been here twenty-five years and have it all to learn — I mean this sort of thing," and Walsh glanced about as though to broaden into generalization his ignorance of society. "This is the first time I have ever crossed a threshold in this town."

"How strange!" He was even more difficult than the deaf financier, this strange old fellow with the shiny pate and unsmiling countenance. "But," she laughed, "I'm going to take this as personal to me — your coming to-night! You won't grudge me the belief that I'm responsible for your appearance — your first appearance — if you really mean me to believe that it is the first!"

"There is no doubt of that. It's what they call my début. I came" — and he smiled, a smile that was of the eyes rather than the thin lips — "I came for that. I came just to see you."

He looked at her so fixedly that she shrugged her shoulders and turned away. This might be the privilege of an old friend of her husband, but his words fell harshly, as from lips unused to gracious speech. Very likely he was an eccentric character,

who, from his own statement, was ignorant of social usage. His keen scrutiny made Mrs. Craighill uncomfortable for a moment.

"Now that you have seen me, Mr. Walsh, please tell me your verdict; spare nothing!"

"I think," said Walsh bluntly, "that you are much nicer than I expected."

He was trying to take a lump of sugar for his coffee with the tongs, but his hand shook.

"Fingers were made first! Allow me! You are smoking too much — that's the answer," she laughed. Walsh was annoyed by this evidence of weakness, for his nerves were usually steady, and he was vexed to be obliged to accept her help.

"Horses and cigars are your only diversions, I hear, Mr. Walsh."

"Who told you that?"

"It was Wayne, I think."

"Oh, yes; Wayne," repeated Walsh, as though recalling the name with difficulty.

"Wayne and you are great friends."

"Well, I don't know that he would admit it," and Walsh smiled. Mrs. Craighill reflected that there was something akin to tenderness just now in the face of this curious man.

"Oh, he told me about it! He spoke of you much more enthusiastically than Colonel Craighill did. It was not that Colonel Craighill didn't say everything that was kind; but with Wayne, it was as though ——"

"Well?"

"As though he loved you — there!"

The colour deepened in Walsh's weather-beaten face, ruddy at all times from the park air, where he drove in every sort of weather; even his bald crown reddened. He was undoubtedly pleased; but he said, with an effort at lightness:

"That's just like Wayne; he's a great joker."

Mrs. Blair flashed back upon them now, and charged them with treasonable confidences. The old banker had detached himself some time earlier and joined the circle which Colonel Craighill was addressing in his semi-oratorical key on the opposite side of the room. Mrs. Craighill and Walsh, having satisfied their own imaginary social hunger, remained with Mrs. Blair while she had her coffee.

"You must come up and see the dance. All the prettiest girls have come. You must go up to the ballroom, too, Mr. Walsh. And I'm going to tell you now, for fear I forget it, how pleased I am that you came."

"You were kind to ask me. It has been a privilege to meet Mrs. Craighill."

Walsh stood up abruptly, bowed with a quaint touch of manner to each of the ladies, pleaded an engagement down town, and left them.

Mrs. Craighill was surprised to find herself turning her head to watch his burly figure through the door.

Wayne, roaming the house restlessly, drifted into the conservatory. It had been his sister's habit to ignore what was practically ostracism as far as

he was concerned socially. She realized the justice of his exclusion, but inwardly, with sisterly fidelity, resented it. There was a pathos in him that touched her; and as she saw him moving about alone, or joining some group where size minimized the danger of contamination, her heart ached for him. Wayne, as he lounged listlessly in the dining room door, saw Walsh in conversation with Mrs. Craighill a moment before Mrs. Blair rejoined them. Wayne stood just behind his father and several of Colonel Craighill's auditors looked up and smiled, but without relaxing their attention.

"You young people," Colonel Craighill was saying, "can't be expected to love this town of ours as we old folks do, who, you might say, fought and bled for it. Even now," he continued, adjusting his plate carefully upon his knee and lifting his eyes dreamily, "the Civil War period is as remote in the minds of the new generation as the Wars of the Roses."

"Tell us a war story, Colonel!" cried a girl in the circle; "something really terrible — of how you led a forlorn hope, the flag lifted in one hand and your trusty sword in another, sprinting right over the ramparts at Saratoga or The Cowpens, or whatever the place was ——"

Colonel Craighill joined in the laugh at his own expense, and appealed to the group:

"Doesn't this prove what I was saying? You children know nothing of American history. I didn't quite come over with Columbus, Julia. A

few weeks ago I was talking to the president — I hadn't really gone to Washington for the purpose but we got into it somehow ——"

Wingfield, who had brought the prettiest of the débutantes down from the ballroom, paused a moment to catch the drift of the Colonel's story. He was bound for the conservatory, where there were opportunities for the better study of his butterfly, who was a trifle awed by the attention of a grown man, one who had, in fact, been in her father's class at Pennsylvania. Wayne, with something akin to a grin on his face, turned away abruptly out of hearing of his father's voice, nodded to Wingfield and passed on. His friend, with the careless ease that distinguished him, had sighted a waiter and two chairs in a far corner of the conservatory and led the way thither.

"Did you hear Julia Morse sting the Colonel?" he asked the girl, as he unfolded his napkin. "I shall have to look her up; I've done her a cruel injustice. I supposed Julia was a stanch subscriber to the Craighill superstition, but she's clearly deeper than I imagined. It's odd I never knew Julia's true worth; I'm annoyed by my own density. The salad — yes!"

"The Craighill superstition?" asked the girl, the knowledge and wisdom of Wingfield's forty-three years towering over her youth and inexperience like a mighty cliff.

"Just that — quite that! The Colonel's military greatness ranks with the ladder superstition, the

Friday superstition, the thirteen at table superstition, and all those things."

"But Colonel Craighill was a soldier in the Civil War — of course not in the Revolution, I know that."

"Now really, if you won't ever say I told you — if this can be a little confidence just between ourselves as old friends — I'll tell you something. The Colonel was never a real colonel at all. But when General Lee started for Chicago by way of Gettysburg in the summer of 1863, Pittsburg was terribly frightened, so the old folks say — I wasn't here, I assure you! — and Colonel Craighill bossed the men who dug entrenchments around the city to keep the Confederates out. He did it well. When your father and I were kids together — doesn't it seem absurd that you and I can't be contemporaries, instead? — oh, my, please forget that I began that sentence; it leads clear back to the time when the Indians camped where the Craighill building stands.

"Well, as I was saying, the Colonel was only a sort of home-guard trench-digger and that sort of thing. He helped the women manage fairs and did it very prettily, but ever since the War the Colonel's stock as a red-handed slayer of his country's foes has been rising. He ranks with Wellington and Grant, with a little dash of Sheridan thrown in."

"I sit behind Colonel Craighill in church and it doesn't seem possible that he would deceive anyone," remarked the girl, half afraid to yield to her delight in these profane utterances.

"Ah! but he deceives himself; he really believes that he held up the pillars of the Union cause and who are we to question him? And he's an ardent if cautious reformer; he'd rather cut the ten commandments to a scant six than mutilate the present tariff, which alone is holy to us Pennsylvanians. Do you know, this salad is really edible; I must congratulate Mrs. Blair on her cook. Of course we're to see you everywhere now. Please don't be running off all the time; it's demoralizing. If we good people don't stay at home, what, may I ask, will become of Pittsburg? We produce everything in Pennsylvania, as you may have noticed — everything but local pride!"

CHAPTER XI

PADDOCK DELIVERS AN INVITATION

IT WAS remarked by the clerical staff in the Craighill offices that in the weeks following Walsh's removal to the jobbing house, Wayne was unusually attentive to his office duties. Clerks in the habit of leaving reports on his desk found themselves questioned in regard to them before the young man gave his *visé*, which had been scrawled carelessly heretofore upon anything thrust before him. It should not too lightly be assumed that Wayne had experienced any sudden conversion or that his unwonted diligence was due to the prickings of conscience; but it had occurred to him, at the passing of Walsh, that he really knew little of his father's affairs.

Roger Craighill's reputation for business ability was solidly established. Until it became the fashion for trust companies to perform such services, he had often been chosen to administer estates; but in keeping with his wish to give more time to public service he had gradually freed himself of such duties. His marriage, changing necessarily the ultimate distribution of his estate, had piqued Wayne's curiosity as to his father's wealth. His long-gathering resentment against his father needed facts with which to fortify and strengthen itself. He was skeptical as

to all of his father's virtues and the marriage had demolished his confidence in his father's conservatism and caution. He now began to test the outward gilt of the resplendent statue of Roger Craighill already imaginably set up by admiring fellow-citizens in the market place. He had only the vaguest idea of the nature of contracts; but he examined a great number of these documents, affecting the ownership and control of properties whose titles were only names to him. He even began summarizing and tabulating these, the better to study them. His father, as of old, referred to him, day by day, matters whose triviality now struck him with greater force than before in view of his growing grasp of affairs.

Wayne had really believed, like everyone else, that his father was a man whose fortune entitled him to be classed with comfortable millionaires — not, indeed, among the Pittsburg collossi, but among the eminently solid and unspectacular rich. As he pondered his computations and scanned the *precis* derived from them he reached the startling conclusion that his father's fortune was in reality a huge and unsupported shell. He had begun studying his father's affairs in the hope of finding some weapon which, at the fitting moment, he might use to humiliate this proud and self-sufficient parent, who had been so intolerant of his sins and weaknesses. Any trifling error or some badly judged investment would have served; but for the fact that his curiosity had been awakened in the beginning as to the amount of his

father's possessions he would have abandoned his researches long before.

It was now perfectly clear that Roger Craighill had ceased to be a factor in the coal and iron industries; that he had been gradually relinquishing his holdings in the substantial enterprises with which he had earlier been identified and that he had re-invested his money in securities of little or no standing in the market. These reflected, Wayne realized, his father's large, imaginative way of viewing "world questions" — as Colonel Craighill called them. For example, his faith in American colonial development was represented in large holdings in Philippine and Porto Rican ventures that struck Wayne as being properly a pendant to an address his father had delivered Somewhere before Something on "America's Duty to Her Colonies."

Wayne had, during the summer of nineteen hundred and seven, given little heed to the whispered rumours of approaching panic. The Great Prosperity had become an old story, and pessimists had predicted its termination for several years without shaking faith in it. On Saturday, the twenty-sixth of October, business closed confidently; before Monday morning a mysterious stifling fog had stolen over the country. It did not seem possible that any human agency could have so thoroughly diffused the word — whatever it was — that paralyzed the financial energy of the remotest village, for it was paralysis, not panic. The newspapers ignored the situation and suppressed the truth; a few men around

mahogany director's tables alone dealt in facts; the rest of the country groped among rumours. Money went into hiding; banks drew the curtains over paying-tellers' windows and calmly declared that there was no cause for alarm. Finance whistled in a graveyard and every one pretended that nothing was the matter. Colonel Craighill, astute student of affairs, fed the journals with optimistic statements affirming the perfect security of the national glory as proved by credible statistics. Everybody was rich, yet nobody had any money; credits were never sounder, but nobody could borrow a cent. The Great Prosperity had been followed by the Great Scare and yet there was no panic in the strict sense of the term. Colonel Craighill was encouraged by his business friends to talk in the newspapers; no one else was so plausible, no one else could so deftly enwreathe the smiling brow of Mammon. His pronouncements soothed the fretful and put to shame those dull persons who had been disposed to question the edicts of the Mahogany Tables. If Colonel Craighill said that Finance is a science not intended to be understanded of the people, it must be so, and mere ignorant mortals did well not to bother their poor heads about it.

Colonel Craighill, believing firmly that merit and length of tenure should be favoured in promotions, had installed as Walsh's successor an accountant who had been chief book-keeper in the office for many years. Walsh had mildly suggested Wayne, but Colonel Craighill rejected the recommendation.

"The suggestion does credit to your kindness of heart, Walsh, but — you must know it is impossible."

Paddock called on Wayne at the office one afternoon to find him bending studiously over a mass of papers. Wayne greeted his old friend amiably.

"Don't be afraid! I'll not bite you this time."

He cleared a chair of papers and bade the clergyman make himself at home.

"I won't conceal it from you, old man, that I was in bad shape that night you came in on me here. I saw everything red — not pink, but a bright burning scarlet. You won't mind my saying it, but your call was deucedly inopportune. I had come up here with my tongue hanging out to drink that quart, and to be caught with the goods on by a gentleman of the cloth annoyed me. I'll not spare your feelings in the matter! And then you looked so fresh and fit and good that that riled me too. I was ashamed of it afterward — the way I received your life confession. And the bottle ——"

"Did you eat it?" laughed Paddock, delighted to find his old friend in this gay humour.

"I told you I was going to the bad that night, and you went out with a hurt look as though I had kicked your dog or done some low thing of that sort. Your tact is wholly admirable. If you had said one word to me when I told you I had started for hell I should have screamed and made a terrible fuss. Strong men could not have held me. You went away and left me, by which token I know you possess the wis-

dom of serpents. And I proceeded at once to get beautifully drunk."

Paddock said nothing, but smiled sadly.

"But I have cut it out now. I shall look no more upon the rum bottle when it's red, not because I don't like it, but because I've thought of much more dreadful and heinous sins."

"Then," said Paddock, not understanding, "I have merely stimulated your ambition as a sinner."

"That's exactly it. There's something rather contemptible about drunkenness. A man of education ought to do worse or be very, very good. Well, how goes the work?"

"First rate. That's what I came in to see you about. I want you, as a leading citizen, to come and look at my plant."

"Certainly, I'll do that with pleasure, some time, provided your real design isn't to show me off as an awful example. Mind you, I don't stand for that. At any rate, I was brought up in the strict letter of the Presbyterian faith, and if I have any value as an example of what shouldn't be, the Presbyterians have first call. It would be low down in me to pose for you Episcopalians, who are a rival body."

"I don't want you to pose as anything; just sit on the back seat and watch the events of an evening. The hat isn't passed — no sermon — maybe a song or two, but you don't have to sing. Your chauffeur will know how to take you out; he quite eclipses me. His batting averages make him a marked man;

his record of strike-outs his last season on the diamond lifted him quite out of the back-lot class."

"Am I to understand that Joe Denny has fallen under your spell and frequents the parish house? Well, I thought he was sneaking the machine out at night pretty often, but I didn't give him credit for anything so noble. I thought it was somebody's housemaid."

"He says he can pitch with his left hand just as well as with his right, but he's passed up the cheering diamond out of devotion to you. He talks about you with tears in his eyes."

"He takes quite the paternal attitude toward me — looks after me as though I were four years old. The paternal attitude," — Wayne repeated musingly — "odd phrase that, Paddock. When is it you want me to come to your joss-house?"

"Why not to-night? The various sections are going to get together for the first time, and it will be interesting to see how they mix. Jim Balinski of Altoona will do a sparring stunt with Mike the motorman; songs and recitations will be provided and the girls' cooking class will attend to the refreshments. I dare you to do better."

"I'm embarrassed," laughed Wayne, lacing his fingers behind his head and sprawling out in his chair. "I'm due to sit in a poker game to-night with a few hardened veterans; but your programme appeals to me as more wholesome. I'll come as long as it's you, but with the distinct understanding that you don't try to convert me. I'll do it once for an

old friend; our friendship will suffer if it ever happens again. But," and he drew down his hands and squared himself in his chair, "but how about all these people you are working for down there? You are going to feed them on cakes and ale and make them dissatisfied, so that they will march into the East End some pleasant evening and tear the citizens from their homes and decorate the trolley poles with them. Your mission in life is pretty, but after all, Jimmy Paddock, can you stick a lever under the lower stratum of society and lift it?"

He struck a match and lighted a cigarette.

"Let me see," replied Paddock soberly, "whether I can explain just what my idea really is. I don't propose to lift the whole mass with my little lever. It seems to me that the books on these subjects are just a lot of phrases. I don't know anything about the deep philosophy of our social organization — I can't understand those things. I haven't the brains to debate social questions with people who don't see them my way. I can't talk to people who say my kind of work is futile; I can't discuss it with them or defend my idea, for two reasons: one is that I don't even understand their phraseology; and the other is that they make me so hot that I want to beat their brains out with a featherduster. There, you see, old man, the wild Indian in me isn't all dead yet; I'm far from being a saint. I don't believe that even the most ignorant and depraved are going to be spoiled, as you say, by being treated like human beings. I don't think the taste of cakes and ale will

send them up into the East End to kill and loot. I may be mistaken, but I believe that those singed and scorched fellows in the steel mills are just as good as I am. I don't recognize class distinctions. I positively decline to allow any sociologist to classify me and pin me on a card like a new kind of flea. But every man is a social class by himself as I look at it. I'm not big enough or strong enough morally or intellectually to try to pull up one of the social strata and transplant it; but I can go out and find some poor devil who is down on his luck or who has got into the gutter, and I can put my poor individual lever under him and pull for all I'm worth and maybe, by the grace of God, I can lift him up a little, just a little bit. Now, you think I'm crazy, don't you?"

"No," said Wayne, "not in the least. You're worse; you're a blooming sentimentalist. But you're a good fellow anyhow, and I don't think you ought to be discouraged. I'd like to contribute ——" and he glanced toward a check-book that lay on his desk.

"No you don't!" cried Paddock. "I don't want your money. I suppose you could give me a good-sized sum and never miss it; but I don't want that kind of money. I accept contributions not as a favour to me but as a favour to the giver; you see, there's a large difference. The richest churchwarden in Pittsburg came out with a party of ladies the other Sunday. He sent me a check for a thousand dollars the next day and advised me to ventilate my chapel; he didn't like the smell of my congregation. I sent him back his check. A girl who works in a

laundry for six dollars a week offered me one of those dollars to help pay for the refreshments to-night and I took it!"

"By George, you have it bad! I suppose the laundry girl's money carried with it the idea of purification. I do wish they would keep chemicals out of my shirts. Perhaps if you would reason with them, Jimmy, you could stop the havoc."

"You illustrate the individual in his most selfish aspect," laughed the minister. "You see only your own torn shirt. Your remedy lies not with the girl but with her employer. You tell him you want better work and that unless he raises the wages of his employees you'll carry your shirts elsewhere."

"That would be far too much trouble; it's a lot easier to buy new linen."

"That's the secret of the whole situation we're talking about; it's easier to buy a new shirt than to take care of the one you've got. By the same token it's easier to wear out a coal miner and throw him away when you can't use him any longer than to preserve the men who are digging our coal to-day. They all go on the rubbish heap — they're just old scrap. I've been up in the anthracite districts where children under the age limit are employed in the breakers; and in the churches of the towns up there men devoutly thank God every Sunday for so kindly putting all this mineral wealth in the hills of the State of Pennsylvania so they may give their own children comforts and luxuries won by the blackened hands of other men's children."

"We have laws that cover such cases; enforce the laws. I'm for that," said Wayne.

"But we don't want to do it that way! We must do it not by law but by love," and the minister smiled his sad smile.

Wayne laughed and threw away his cigarette.

"You're a mighty good fellow, Jimmy Paddock, but you're a sentimentalist, that's all. There may be some of that in me down underneath somewhere, but I doubt it. Anyhow, I'll take a peep at your little party to-night; I dare say it won't do me any harm."

CHAPTER XII

THE SHADOWS AGAINST THE FLAME

"DO I know the place? Sure!" said Joe Denny when Wayne ordered the chauffeur to be ready with the limousine at eight o'clock. The runabout was in the shop and the limousine was a next year's model that Wayne had just acquired. "He's the wonder, this Father Jim."

"What's that?" demanded Wayne.

"Father Jim, they call him out at Ironstead. Say, he knows how to put the boys to work."

"What line of study have you tackled?"

"Me study? Say, you're not on to me. I'm one of the professors."

Wayne glared at him without speaking and the former ball player explained, with unmistakable pride and a gradual lapse into the vernacular.

"I'm the base-ball professor. We're going to put up a nine in the spring that will make anything else look sick that gets in front. Say, they're good people out there. It's a new one on me, that kind of religion; all friendly and sociable-like, and the strong, glad hand. He don't ask you to sign the pledge or come to church. He says he ain't running in opposition to the saloons, he's just going to put up a better show. But he's made a deal with the tank joints.

He's told all of 'em that if they sell to a fellow what's loaded or to hurry-the-can kids he'll prosecute 'em and have their license took up. He goes into the saloons and talks to the bosses quite confidential-like and tells 'em he doesn't object to their business *as* such. He says the workin' man's entitled to sip his suds the same as the gents in the Allequippa Club; but the bar-keep ought to throw out any man that gets loaded, which is not being a gent any more. He talks kind o' natural and reasonable, like he had been a bar-keep himself some time. Say, it's a sure thing he could do his own bouncin' all right. There was a Roumanian low-brow out there who cheered himself with alcohol straight and went over to the parish house to clean it out. He butted in and kicked open the door where the geography class was learnin' all about Afriky where the niggers and monks come from. The kids in the night school skidooed for the home plate, seein' the fire in the Roumanian's eye. 'This is a hell of a place,' he yells, and reached for the Father. Father Jim caught him one under the ear and knocked 'im over a big globe they have out there to find the North Pole on. The bum thought the earth had caved in on 'im for sure and laid on his back bleatin' like a sick sheep. Some of the kids had got the cops and when they chased in the Father was pourin' ice water on the Roumanian, delicate-like. 'We'll give him about six months for this,' says the sergeant; 'don't bother, Father, to clean him up — he'll come to in the wagon all right,' says the sergeant. 'Sorry, boys, you've been put

to the trouble,' says Father Jim, settin' the earth on its right end again, 'but my friend was late to his lesson to-night and came in so fast he had heart failure,' says Father Jim. 'Step downstairs, officers, and the night cookin' class will give you some coffee,' says Father Jim. And if he didn't put the slob to sleep in his own bed — honest to God he did!

"And listen," continued Joe, pleased to see that Wayne was interested, "the gayest that happened was about old Isidore, the Jew ole-clothes man, who had a row with the rabbi. He had it in for the rabbi good and strong and he got a pair of pig's feet and slipped 'em under the rabbi's chair in the synagogue, which was against the religion, and oh, my, some of the members of that church got after Isidore and was goin' to make 'im into a burnt sacrifice all right. But Father Jim hid 'im in the cellar at the parish house and went to square it with the rabbi. You might think, them not bein' members of the same church, and viewin' matters quite different, they'd give each other the razzle; but Father Jim umpired the row all right and Isidore buys his meat at the kosher shop now, which is proper, Father Jim says, him bein' a Jew, which is a great race, he says. Shall I crank the buzz wagon?"

Guided by a pillar of cloud that wavered against the stars of the keen, autumn night, the motor sped on toward Ironstead. The black pall was lighted fitfully by fierce gusts of flame; golden showers of sparks rose ceaselessly, fountain-like, and gave a glory and charm to the scene. At one point there

fell on Wayne's ears the mighty cymbal-crash of hammers, now ringing clear and resonant, and lost again in a moment in other tumults of the valley. The spectacle, the sounds, spoke with a new language to his imagination. Here was the most stupendous thing in the world, this forging of the power of the hills into implements and structures and weapons for man's use. The steel frames of towering buildings, the ribs of swift ships, the needle that sews the finest seam — these were all born of this uproar.

Wayne stood up in the motor to peer upon figures that moved about in a glare of flame as though on a great stage set for a fantastic drama. He knew the practical side of these smelting and forging and riveting processes; but it suited his mood to-night to think of them as part of some tremendous phantasmagoria. He singled out one dark Titan as the chief actor, and named him Vulcan; and these were his slaves, these shadowy shapes that swung the brimming crucibles on huge cranes or manipulated with ease the long glowing bars that might have been the prop and stay of some fiery-hearted Ætna. What could it all mean to these hurrying, leaping men, the discordant hymn of the hammers, the terrible heat, the infernal beat and clash, the nerve-wracking cry of the saws as they severed the hot bars, the venomous, serpent-like hissing that marked the last protest of the rebellious ore against these tyrants who had wrested it from earth's jealous treasuries.

And Joe, sitting unmoved, with his hands upon the wheel, turned to see why his master delayed. Wayne

crouched in the open door of the tonneau, his broad shoulders filling the opening, his cap on the back of his head, gazing upon a spectacle with which he had been familiar from childhood; but to-night it took new hold of him. To these "singed and scorched" beings, the shadows against the flame, Jim Paddock was giving his life.

"Go on, Joe!" he shouted, and slammed the door.

CHAPTER XIII

JEAN MORLEY

THE parish house of St. Luke's was a remodeled two-story business block adjoining the frame church. One of the store-rooms had been cut in two, half of it serving as a reading room for men; the rest of it was used as a *crèche* where young children were looked after at hours when their mothers were too busy to care for them. The other half of the building served as an assembly room on occasions and here the exercises of the evening were already in progress when Wayne arrived. At one end of the room a ring had been improvised and within the roped enclosure a string quartet was playing a waltz to which the feet of a considerable portion of the audience kept time. The place was packed and Wayne stood until the end of the number sandwiched between two labourers who had paused on their way home. Their faces were still grimy; their dinner-pails rubbed Wayne's legs democratically. A prestidigitator followed the quartet with a series of sleight-of-hand tricks. He was a young Italian and was warmly applauded by representatives of his race in the audience. A young woman sang a popular ballad, the pastoral note of whose refrain, "In the woodland, by the river, I await

my love, my own," was plaintively incongruous in the place.

Wayne was aware of an undercurrent of excitement, especially among the men and boys. They were on their good behaviour, but the tameness of the programme had begun to cloy. A recitation by a girl in pale blue, who stood in painful embarrassment for several minutes while her memory teased her afar off with forgotten rhymes, elicited a few mutterings of disapproval. Someone on the back benches cried, during a long and seemingly endless pause, "Where did you lose it, Minnie?" whereat she withdrew in tearful confusion, followed by sympathetic applause. A scuffle in the rear caused general disorder and drew attention away from the platform. The brother of the recitationist was, it seemed, trying to punch the head of the culprit who had mocked her. Wayne had so far seen nothing of Paddock, but the minister now rose near the scene of conflict and with a quiet word subdued the belligerents. A young man, in a necktie of violent green, who appeared to be the master of ceremonies, leaped to the stage and called for order. He announced that the literary and musical numbers were concluded. "If the gents back there wot wants to fight will ca'm theirselves, we'll give 'em a few points on how it's done by real scrappers. The evenin's stunts will close with five rounds between Jim Balinski of Altoona, and Mike, the motorman. You fellas that want to be noisy better get out now or be chased out."

A wild cheer, punctuated by cat-calls, greeted the two boxers, as, clad in tights, they stepped nimbly into the roped enclosure and saluted the admiring audience. A howl of "Kill the Irishman" from a violent partisan was drowned in groans and shrieks of "Put him out" in four languages. At this moment Paddock appeared, divested of his coat and waistcoat, gave a hitch to his belt, amid cheers, examined the gloves of the combatants and admonished them as to the rules. Wayne noted with interest that Joe, his chauffeur, was time-keeper, with a dish-pan and stick for gong. A hush fell upon the crowd as the men warily began feeling of each other. The round ended in lively sparring without apparent advantage to either man. The Irishman was, Wayne learned from one of his neighbours, a member of Paddock's own class in boxing at the parish house and sentiment seemed to favour him. The second round was marked by clever foot-work by the Irishman, who walked round the Altoona visitor to the delight of the spectators. In the third and fourth rounds the Irishman continued to play with his antagonist, who doggedly sought an opening for a heavy blow. He landed heavily with his right several times, but the Irishman's nimbleness saved him from damage. In mere cleverness, the local man was the better boxer, a fact which was clear enough to his adversary, who held back and waited for an opportunity to break through the Irishman's ready guard with a telling blow. The strategic

moment came when, in the last round, the Irishman jumped away after raining half a dozen blows on the enemy's head, and grinned his satisfaction amid laughter and howls of delight. In his joy of the situation he made a gesture that indicated his complete confidence in the fortune of battle to his friends in the crowd, and his insolence was promptly rewarded by a telling clip in the face that brought him blinking to his knees.

He came to time, however, with rage in his eyes. Several women shrieked at the sight of his blood-smeared nose and there was a slight commotion as a girl near the door was led out to faint. "Kill 'im, Mike!" roared a dozen voices. "You're all right, Altoona!" yelled a lone supporter of the visitor. They clinched, but the Altoona man flung off the Irishman with ease. "Knock 'im out, Mike!" chorused the motorman's friends. The Irishman feinted elaborately, but his antagonist sullenly maintained his guard and waited. The time was short in which to achieve victory, but he had saved himself for a supreme effort. The Irishman hit him a smart clip on the chin that staggered him for a moment, and then the man from Altoona drew back and gathered himself together. He swung his arm high, as though it had been a hammer, and the Irishman cowered under it, slipped as he sidestepped and the Altoona man, striking out wildly, landed in a heap with his knees in the Irishman's face.

The male portion of the crowd charged the stage

with a roar. Wayne was aware that Joe, whose voice had occasionally risen above the tumult, seemed now to be trying to bring order out of the prevailing chaos. The combatants quickly retired; Paddock donned his coat and begged all to remain for refreshments, which were further announced in the odour of coffee that stole up from the basement. Many to whom the boxing contest had been the beginning and end of the entertainment, were already crowding into the street, and no effort was made to detain them. Half the benches were carried out under Joe's direction by two or three stalwart young fellows while the former light of the diamond, filled with the pride of brief authority, watched its effect upon Wayne, who was somewhat embarrassed to know what to do with himself. Paddock strolled about addressing a few words to everyone. The colour glowed warmly under the clergyman's dark skin; his smile was less sad than usual. A young man dropped the plate of ice cream he was passing to a girl and Paddock met the tragic situation by telling a story of a similar mishap of his own.

He spoke to Wayne last of all and drew him into a group of half a dozen saying, "Young friends, this is an old schoolmate of mine; won't you make room for us?" With paper napkins on their knees he and Wayne were soon taunting each other with some of their old-time adventures, while the listeners beamed their delight at the intimate quality of the colloquy. Wayne told several stories about Paddock that were listened to eagerly by the little circle.

The girls giggled; the young men laughed aloud. Paddock threw in a word here and there to elicit some new tale. Wayne's success with his auditors stimulated him; the circle widened, and he talked of some of his experiences in the coal mines during the year of his probation, using colloquial phrases of the men underground as he had learned them in the bituminous mines. The simple frocks of the girls; their red, labour-scarred hands; these young men in their cheap, ready-made clothing; the brassy jewelry worn by several of them, touched both his humour and his pity. But he was aware, too, that he enjoyed their attention. In his sister's house a few nights before, among people of his own order, no such experience as this would have been possible. He rose presently at the climax of an anecdote that had pleased his hearers particularly.

"Don't hurry away; I want to show you what we have here," said Paddock. "About all I say for it is that it is clean — most of the time. In there is the men's reading-room; a table for writing, too. Pipes, you notice, are not discouraged."

They looked in where a dozen men of all ages sat about small tables reading newspapers and periodicals.

"Some of these old fellows are as regular as British Museum readers. Every man who comes here can have a cup of coffee and a sandwich in the evening for the asking; the cooking class down stairs looks after that. I'm putting on a lot of foreign newspapers. A few books over there — just a beginning.

Anybody can take a book home by writing his name on a card. Bring them back? Oh, well, what if they don't? Down below is the kitchen — mind the step! — the building was in bad shape when I got hold of it; I'll get after that stairway to-morrow. Here's the cooking school; about twenty girls are taught by a domestic science teacher regularly. A part of the class volunteered to provide the refreshments to-night. That coffee wasn't bad, was it?"

At the foot of the dark stairway they emerged into a low basement whose cleanliness and order were at once apparent even to the lay sense.

"Don't let me bore you. I just want you to get a bird's-eye view. This plant isn't complete yet — we have only the essential requirements; the frills will come later. These are more advanced pupils; younger girls we get in the afternoons. Rather remarkable young woman over there, wiping dishes. Came out last Sunday and volunteered to help in her leisure. I must speak to those girls a minute."

Wayne followed the clergyman through the unfamiliar apparatus of the school kitchen to the farther end of the room. The young women indicated were evidently enjoying themselves and as the two men approached one of them laughed happily — a laugh of quality that drew Wayne's attention to her. He stopped suddenly, seeing that she was beyond question the girl he had met in the art gallery; there was no mistaking that head of hers! Her back was toward the door, and she had not heard the men approach. Her laugh rang out

again — it was like a flash of water down a hillside, or any other bright and happy thing. She turned, towel and cup in hand, as the minister greeted her companion and introduced Wayne.

"This is Mr. Craighill, looking for a model cooking school, and he knew where to come!"

"Oh, Miss Morley, this is my friend, Mr. Craighill. He's been watching our show upstairs. I haven't dared ask how he liked it, but he's a judge of coffee and he drank all of yours!"

Paddock's joy in his work shone in his face; he was immensely pleased that Wayne had given him the evening. One of the dish-washers drew him away to meet a newcomer, and Wayne and Miss Morley regarded each other gravely. Her arms were bared to the elbows; she held a half-dried cup in her hands; a blue check apron covered her gown. There was no question of recognition; both remembered their former meeting. Wayne spoke at once.

"This is different from the art gallery. I was sorry about that. You were quite right — not to want to know me. I have thought about that afternoon a good deal."

"I have thought about it too," said the girl, "and I have been sorry I spoke to you as I did. I had no right to assume that you did not mean to be kind. I shouldn't have stopped to talk to you that afternoon if I had not been so full of the picture that I really didn't think about myself — or you. The portrait seemed somehow to make it right

enough in the first place — it all seemed impersonal. But I didn't like your wanting to take my sketch."

"You didn't like it," said Wayne, "because I am who I am. And you were right. I have thought of it since and you were quite right. I am glad to have this chance of telling you so. I saw you in my sister's house that same afternoon and I asked her who you were and she would not tell me — you see I am a very bad man," he concluded, and bowed slightly, looking down at her hands that were long and fine, but labour-roughened, as he had seen that first day.

"I didn't know you were interested in this sort of work," she said, so obviously wishing to be kind that he smiled as their eyes met. Her crown of dark hair, her fair skin, her splendid blue eyes with their mystical gray shadows struck him anew.

"I can't allow you to be deceived about me. I was never here before or in any such place. I have heard of such things, and haven't approved of them. I came out to-night because Mr. Paddock is an old friend."

"He is wonderful; I came to a service last Sunday out of curiosity; I had never seen any of this settlement work. He talked to the people as though he were one of themselves — I suppose you wouldn't call it preaching at all — and it is easy to see how they all love him."

"No doubt he interests them; but I suppose we'll have to judge his work by its results," he ventured, wishing to see what she would say.

"I don't agree with that, Mr. Craighill. If a man has the heart for a work like this, that's enough, isn't it? The results don't matter."

He smiled at her earnestness, but replied gravely: "It's a good deal; it's undoubtedly a whole lot!"

He had not been deeply impressed by the evening's entertainment as a moral force. It seemed, in fact, a far cry from the performances of Paddock's clumsy amateurs to the souls of the spectators. The reading room he had liked better; and the cooking school was well enough, though it was difficult to reconcile any of it with his earlier knowledge of Paddock. He did not quite formulate the idea into words, but he was unable to see just how Paddock was to profit by these labours; nor was he persuaded that the people the minister served would be materially benefited. So far as Paddock was personally concerned he could join heartily enough in the girl's admiration. But now that chance had thrown her again in his way, he wished to make the most of it; a poor art student, contributing her services in this humble fashion to the work of a social settlement, was a new species. She must be an unusual young woman or Fanny Blair would not have taken her up. The remembrance of her sharp rebuff in the art gallery did not make it easy to talk to her now; but she put down her cup and towel and addressed him with a directness that was disquieting.

"I said a moment ago that I was sorry I had spoken to you in the way I did. I want to put it a little

differently now. It troubled me afterward — I felt that I had been unjust; and I don't think we ought to feel about anybody as I showed I felt about you — as though ——"

"As though being an infamous sort of person decent people shrink from was a bar," he supplied, curious as to what she meant to say further.

"Well," she continued, "I didn't apply to you that day one of my own principles: that we all owe something to each other — that we have no right to hurt anyone, no matter who it is. It's what I think Mr. Paddock has come here to teach; it's what I think religion is!"

She was trying to apply Paddock's religion to his case, and her sincerity was making a serious business of it. It was an odd sensation, this, of talking to a remarkably handsome young woman who frankly wished to deal with him in the light of her religion. He was surprised to find that he felt no inclination to laugh at her; she interested him immensely and he was sorry when Paddock returned and interrupted their interview.

"I thank you," he said; "I appreciate your kindness to me."

Paddock carried him off to see the remainder of the house, whose facilities he hoped to augment by purchasing the adjoining property and adding a swimming pool.

"I think I like the cooking school best," observed Wayne, "but a pool would be a valuable addition; I see that. If you bathe the flock and persuade

them not to fry their food you're doing a lot for their bodies, and I suppose it won't hurt their souls any."

Paddock opened a door at the back of the second floor and turned on the electric lights, disclosing a small room containing an iron bed, a table, a shelf of books, a desk and little else.

"Remember that cup? Got it at St. John's for sprinting. You were second, Craighill, a fact which I always remember with satisfaction. That's the only bit of ancient memorabilia that I lug about with me. Those were the good times of the consulship of Plancus all right, and seeing you brings them back with a rush. Off here is a little special indulgence I allow myself — a shower; I take all my ice water that way. But let's go down and see what they're doing below."

Joe had put the assembly room in order and stood by the door discussing baseball with a group of admiring youngsters. Paddock had carried his hat and coat to the assembly room.

"I'm going to take Miss Morley and her friend into town. Here they are now."

The young women were just appearing at the head of the basement stairway. Joe crossed the room to meet Wayne.

"Are you ready, sir?"

"Yes, bring the car up. And, Paddock, if you are going in with those women, I'll take you all in the car; there's plenty of room."

"Thank you. I'm sure we'll be grateful. The trolleys are a torture."

Wayne went into the street to where Joe was lighting the car lamps at the curb, leaving Paddock to repeat his invitation to the young women. As he returned to the assembly room Miss Morley met him.

"It's kind of you to offer to take us in; but it's unnecessary for Mr. Paddock to go. He means to come back here to-night and it's a hard trip. After what I said to you that day at the Institute you might think ——"

"Yes," he said, fumbling the buttons of his coat.

"Whatever I felt that day I don't feel any more. And I don't want to be a trouble to Mr. Paddock."

He smiled as she finished. What she meant was that having seen him in this place and having found that he and Paddock were friends, she could forgive him for having tried to flirt with her; that his visit to the settlement had in a way lightened the burden of his sins and made their acquaintance possible.

Paddock saw them into the car, not sorry to be relieved of the long journey into town. Wayne said that he would drive himself, and when Paddock had bidden the young women good night, the minister turned and shook hands with Joe, who had been making sure of the rear light. Wayne leaned out to ask him what was the matter and saw Joe staring into the car with an odd look on his face. His hand went to his cap and he mumbled something which the noise of the engine drowned. Then he ran round and jumped to the vacant seat beside

Wayne, where he crouched in silence throughout the journey. Occasionally Wayne checked the car's speed to ask the chauffeur the way, and once Joe jumped out to investigate an ominous change in the throb of the engine; but Wayne was spared the familiar ironies with which Joe usually criticized his driving. The expression of Joe's face at the car door and this subsequent moody silence puzzled Wayne; and as his memory sought to reconstruct in all its trifling details his encounter with Miss Morley at the Institute the fact that he had afterward seen Joe following the girl through the dusk as he sat with Wingfield pondering the orchestra's affairs took precedence of every other incident of that first meeting. He heard the voices of the passengers occasionally, but he did not once turn his head. He was trying, for almost the first time, to drive the car carefully, and the effort began presently to vex him.

"You take it, Joe," he said.

He repeated the address Miss Morley had given him, and Joe drove to it without comment, a boarding house in an unfashionable quarter at the edge of that anomalous borderland where the long line of dingy shops and tenements paused a little nonplussed before the broad open area in which cathedral spires and new smart dwellings strove, it seemed, to make peace with art and music as enthroned within the solid walls of the Institute.

Wayne waited on the steps until Miss Morley and her companion had opened the door. The young

women expressed their thanks cordially in the flickering light of the hall lamp. As he turned back to the car, the voice of Miss Morley's friend was flung out by the closing door — "Jean!"

Wayne bade Joe drive home, and shut himself in with her name.

CHAPTER XIV

A LIGHT SUPPER FOR TWO

AS WAYNE entered his father's house he saw with surprise that the little reception parlour, adjoining the drawing room, which was usually dark at this hour, was brilliantly lighted. His surprise increased as Mrs. Craighill appeared in the door and gazed at him without speaking.

"Well!" he said.

"Well!" she returned.

"Just home from a party, are you? Where's father?"

She put her finger to her lips, and indicated the closed library door with a slight movement of the head.

"He's writing a speech or something. He had a stenographer come up right after dinner. I was *de trop*, so I have been waiting all this time for you to come home and amuse me. And you are very, very late, you bad boy."

He followed her into the reception room, a place rendered comfortless by the decorator and furnisher, and Mrs. Craighill resumed her seat in the least forbidding of its chairs. She suffered Wayne to mitigate its severe lines with pillows.

"There are better loafing places in the house,"

he observed, as he sat down opposite her and felt for his cigarette case.

"No smoking! You can't get it out of these draperies."

"You'll have to this time." He dropped the match stick into a Sevres urn at his elbow and looked her over.

"The Colonel's been at it ever since dinner?"

"Since eight-thirty by the stair clock."

"You might have gone to bed."

"Oh, yes, there's always that; but it's a bore, going to bed right after dinner. I've never been used to it. And besides, you never can tell: I might have been needed; the door might have swung open at any minute and a demand made for a date — at just what hour George crossed the Delaware, and whether it was real or stage ice they put into history so the Father of his Country would look well lithographed in the boat with his cloak pulled round his shoulders."

"You needn't trouble about being called in for consultation. When the oration is all done you will be given a chance to attend a dress rehearsal — or two of them. I used to hear those things; but now you've cut me out."

This was the first time since the afternoon of her arrival that Wayne had seen his stepmother alone. He had, in fact, seen little of her. They met usually at the breakfast table, but Wayne was never home at midday and as often as not he dined at the Club. A series of dinners and receptions in her honour had

engaged Mrs. Craighill's attention; her coming had forced the season and these functions were now lagging. Her presentation to the society of the Greater City had, however, been accomplished; and she was now woven into the social fabric, one of its bright figures, discernible to any eye. She was Mrs. Craighill, a sufficient answer to any inquiry. She had met nearly every one it was necessary to meet; even the small band of recalcitrants who had sworn that she should never cross their thresholds had sat with her at other people's tables, and taken her hand at larger functions whose charging battalions were recruited from the blue-book.

"What have you been doing?" she asked, after a moment.

"I'm afraid to tell you; you would never believe it of me. I've been out to Ironstead seeing how the other half amuses itself in my old friend Paddock's parish house. There was a boxing-match; a girl recited 'Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night,' or enough of it, then a social mix-up with ice cream and coffee."

"Something new, isn't it, your going in for that sort of thing?"

"Rather a new shot; but not so tiresome as you might imagine. As a social diversion it would compare favourably with shows I've attended in this neighbourhood."

"I've met Mr. Paddock; I'm on the Children's Hospital committee with him. You see, as Mrs. Craighill I'm ex-officio — is that right? — in a lot

of things already. I'd rather prefer to wait a little and be recognized on my own merits, but then ——"

"Maybe they're afraid to wait for your merits to disclose themselves," he suggested.

"Please don't say unkind things to me. I'm likely to cry."

"Don't do that. Tears wouldn't add anything to the effect of that gown; it's one of the most perfect things I have ever seen you wear."

"It isn't bad, is it?" she rose with sudden animation and took a turn across the room, looking over her shoulder at her shadow in a long mirror.

"It's charming. There's no denying that there's something very nice about you, Addie. You know how to wear your clothes; this matronly air you've been cultivating — the much-married look, isn't wholly to my taste, but you'll do. What's that you've been reading?"

He stooped and picked up what appeared to be a magazine in a linen cover, stamped with gold letters. She caught at it, but he held it away and opened upon several hundred sheets of typewritten manuscript neatly bound into the case.

He flung it aside, laughing aloud.

"The Colonel's speeches! Lord, Addie, do you think you *have* to do it?"

She had coloured, but manifested no resentment at his tone.

"He asked me if I didn't want to read some of his things, and what was the answer?"

"Yes; what was it? It's taking a mean advan-

tage though! It was fitting that you should come in here to read those orations; they're like the furniture — lines of austerest grace, with a little gilt stuck on here and there. You must have had a roaring time of it."

"Oh, I haven't done so badly!" She produced a novel and tapped the cover significantly. "I really haven't felt called on to commit all the speeches to memory. You wouldn't suggest that, would you?"

"I shouldn't exclude that from the parental expectations. It would undoubtedly boost you in the Colonel's regard. It would show a becoming interest in his affairs. A man of ideals must have a sympathetic wife."

"He's locked up with his ideals, which are probably quite beyond me — and I'm outside the door," she concluded plaintively.

"That's wholly complimentary. You are distracting — never more so than now. You affect my own ideals pleasantly. It was always so. I wonder what would have happened if — well, if your dear mother hadn't been so obviously and beastly grasping."

He had not expected it to come so soon, this change — this appeal, this cry, faint though it was, of distress. His eyes brightened as he watched her. A black velvet band clasped her throat and a diamond twinkled in a pendant that swung from it by a tiny chain. The line from her brow, with the brown hair rising abruptly above it, to her fair throat, could

not have been improved upon. Though he had never thought of her as common or vulgar, in his assay she had never been of standard weight and fineness; she had been offered at too many prices in too many markets, and he was not sure yet how much alloy lay under the bright surface. On the day of her home-coming he had mistakenly expected to find her ready to meet him on his own terms, but she had rebuffed him. He had felt that she must share in time his own contempt for his father; he had been content to wait for that, and he felt that he had not waited in vain. To-night, with only a month of married life behind her, she had a grievance; she was bored, and eager for sympathy. Her youth and prettiness, her charm, of which she was not ignorant, meant as little to her elderly husband as moonlight to strong, deep-flowing waters. Like a troublesome child she had, in effect, been told to sit in a corner outside the door while her husband gave heed to important matters within. It was inevitable that Wayne, by reason of their old acquaintance, and with the same roof sheltering them, should be her chief dependence in unhappy hours.

She had gathered herself with an effort and frowned; but a smile played about her lips, and she bent her head with a becoming grace.

"I thought I asked you not to think of that. We buried all that that first afternoon."

"I'm not so sure we buried it. The ghost of it still walks!"

"It had no ghost; it was too dead for that."

"If it had been dead ——"

"Well, what would have happened?" she asked, bending toward him, her elbow on her knee, her chin in her palm, as was her way.

"For one thing, you wouldn't have sat here all evening in this hideous, stiff room. You have a comfortable sitting room upstairs where you could have taken your ease while the Colonel prepared his oration."

"I don't believe I understand," she said. "You know I am a very dull person, Wayne; I am not a bit — what do you call it? — subtle?"

"You're a mighty pretty woman; there's no doubt of that. And knowing I think so and would be likely to mention it, you stayed down here to be sure not to miss me when I came home."

"Please don't speak to me like that; it is not what I expected of you. I told you when I came here that I meant to be very, very good. More than that, I asked you to help me. I threw myself on your mercy!"

The tears were bright in her eyes and she leaned back and turned her face away from him.

He rose with a laugh.

"For heaven's sake, don't cry! It's bad for the complexion. Let's dig in the pantry for something to eat."

"Splendid!" she cried, jumping up.

He tried to take her hand, but she brushed by him and ran toward the dining room, where she

bade him turn on the lights and wait while she foraged.

"Stay right here, please! I will bring the things myself; don't expect too much, but I think — I think there will be cold chicken."

"The strong drink is usually kept locked — you must have the key."

"Nothing but milk, or distilled water! You may have either. You wait here — it would look better."

She pursed her lips and bent her head with the slightest of inclinations toward the library.

When he heard her at the swinging pantry door a moment later he sprang up and flung it open. She carried a fowl and bread, and told him he might fetch knives and forks and other essentials of their feast. She was in a laughing mood now, and in the midst of their preparations, she ran to the hall door and listened, like a child about to ravish the jam pots. The grace of her slight figure, her pretty way of catching up her skirts, the mockery of her anxiety lest they be discovered, brought them into a new and delightful intimacy.

"Do you remember?" asked Wayne, crossing his legs at ease and nibbling the sandwich she had made for him, "do you remember our little picnic on the rocks up there at Struby's Cove, when we got lost on the drive home? There was chicken then — perhaps it was a distant cousin of this one. All chickens are sacred henceforth!"

"And there was a new moon and the wind blew

in cold from the sea and the pine grove by the shore was dark and sad."

"And I kissed you that night — the first time!"

She was serious instantly and held up her hand warningly.

"Don't be naughty; that was a long time ago!"

"Two years last August, which is not so very long!"

"Long enough to be forgotten, though."

"I am not in the habit of forgetting pleasant things. You were a being to worship that night."

"Your worship was pretty short; you took that Philadelphia widow driving the next day."

"But we didn't have a picnic and get lost."

"Decidedly not, as she was from Philadelphia!" And they laughed softly, in the subdued key of their talk.

A little later Colonel Craighill was heard at the library door bidding the stenographer good night. Mrs. Craighill rose, clutching her plate and glass.

"Service was for one only," she whispered, and on this hint Wayne restored her chair to its place against the wall, and with a little nod, a shrug of her shoulders, a pretty lifting of the brows, she vanished through the pantry door and took flight upward by way of the back stairs. Wayne heard the click of the buttons in the hall as his father turned off the lights, and a moment later Colonel Craighill appeared at the door with a handful of papers.

"You up, Wayne? I thought a burglar was entertaining himself. I really believe I'm hungry,

too. I've delayed writing a statement I was asked to prepare of the educational conditions of the South, and there was a lot of statistical matter to go over. I think I have it the way I want it though."

He stretched himself at ease in a chair, while Wayne brought a plate and cut him a slice of the fowl.

"What have you been up to to-night?"

"I went out to Ironstead to a show at Paddock's parish house."

Colonel Craighill's face expressed surprise and pleasure.

"I'm glad to hear it; Paddock's a good man for you to cultivate."

"Oh, I don't know about that!" said Wayne, instantly resentful. "I'm not sure but he's a dangerous character."

"No man who gives his life for the good of mankind can be any other than a useful member of society."

"I suppose that's so, but if Paddock should lead his ragged legion in an attack on the banks downtown and raid the shops it would be less admirable."

"We must take a hopeful view of society; every school-house in the land is an outpost of democratic ideals," declared Colonel Craighill impressively, plucking, Wayne guessed, a phrase from the address he had been preparing.

"Here at home we're going to need a good many school-houses to knock the spirit of democracy into the riff-raff of Europe. When do you go away again?"

"Oh, not till early in December, when I go to Boston for the conference of the Municipal Service League. Adelaide will go with me."

"I have intended speaking to you about one or two matters. Since Walsh left I've been going over all our affairs."

Colonel Craighill stared at his son in frank surprise.

"You have been checking over the securities? If you had asked me I could have saved you a good deal of bother. I have them all tabulated so that their salient features can be seen at a glance of the eye."

"Yes; I have a copy of your synopsis and have been checking it."

"I have had that done from time to time so that it has been kept up to date. I'm glad, however, that you are taking an interest in these matters."

"The whole story is not told in your list," said Wayne, ignoring his father's approval.

"Very likely; only the more important items are noted."

"In the case of that Gregory property you put into the Sand Creek combination, Gregory maintains that he has a claim — I don't quite understand what it is. He's a hard one to get anything out of."

"I don't recall just the terms of that arrangement, but the old fellow's become a great nuisance. The whole Sand Creek field used to be covered with shafts sunk by small operators who were killing each other by preposterous competition. When

we organized the Sand Creek Company and took them all over, we were obliged to shut down two-thirds of the old shafts to make anything out of any of them. As I remember, I made the deal with Gregory myself, more out of kindness to him than anything else. I had known him many years and he had been unfortunate. It has always been my policy to deal generously with such cases. The vein through his acreage is poor, the coal inferior and with many ugly faults in it."

"But there's a lower vein that is all right. I found the engineer's report with an estimate of the amount of coal in his hundred acres."

"Well, it's a matter we must look into. We'll take it up before the end of the year. There's never any use in being in a hurry about such things. I have always remembered what your grandfather Wayne said to an anxious young real estate agent once, in your grandfather's old age. The young man was trying to sell your grandfather a lot down-town somewhere and became offensively persistent. One day your grandfather turned round on him and said — the thing impressed me, for your grandfather was exceedingly wise: 'Young man, I have never made any money by being in a hurry.' I have thought of that remark a thousand times!"

"I remember with equal distinctness," said Wayne, smiling a trifle, "that once when grandfather was teaching me to play checkers he said never to imagine that the other fellow in any game was a fool."

"Quite characteristic; he had almost Emerson's

way of shooting into the bull's eye. I wish there were more men like Andrew Wayne; he was faithful in all his obligations, a man of absolute exactness in all his dealings. I used to hope you had inherited some of his traits."

Colonel Craighill's eye rested on the glass of water which stood by his son's plate. The significance of the glance was not wasted on Wayne. With an almost imperceptible movement he pushed the glass away from him.

"You have been very regular at the office lately: I want you to know that I have noticed it, and that it has pleased me very much — very greatly indeed. I have sometimes wondered, Wayne, whether Dick Wingfield's influence has been the best for you. I'm afraid he doesn't take life very seriously. With his intelligence and leisure he might be of great help in our reform work."

"Dick's interested in the fine arts and not in politics. I'm sorry you don't approve of him; he's the best friend I've ever had. He's the only man in town who hasn't kicked me at some time or other. I probably need kicking, but it's nice to know there's one human being who withholds his foot."

"You will find, if you follow your present course, and practice sobriety and industry, that you will not lack friends."

"I suppose so, but it's the sinner that needs friends, not the saint. But in this Gregory matter — if you are going to be gone next week ——"

"I'll write to Gregory and tell him to come in

later on and we'll talk over his case. He's always appreciated the fact that I took care of him at the time we formed the Sand Creek Company. I'll fix that up with him; he'll have to be reasonable. He's a simple old fellow and if he sees the absurdity of his claim he'll be glad to settle."

He yawned and looked at his watch. "Dear me, it's half-past one! Will you put out the lights?"

Wayne heard his father's door close, but he sat smoking and pondering. His interview with him had left him irritated and restless. He was well aware that Mrs. Craighill had found relief and pleasure in his company, and he smiled as he recalled her hurried flight through the pantry at his father's approach. The incident lacked dignity, but his father's treatment of her had lacked, too, and she was a young woman and admiration was sweet to her. The girl at the parish house stole across the smoke-dimmed horizon of his dreaming, in her gingham apron, with the towel and cup in her hands. Her friend had called her Jean — Jean, dearest of names, with its hint of Scottish mists and moors and heatherbloom; and Jean seemed the inevitable name for her, predestined of all time. Simplicity and sincerity were in the haunting tones of her voice. His ready imagination threw a bright glamour round her. She suggested all manner of pictures; perhaps it was the remembrance of her against Sargent's masterly portrait that prompted this; at any rate she was the most vivid person he had ever known, and his memory flung him

back sharply upon that first meeting, and he saw the anger in her eyes and heard her saying: "*I don't care for your acquaintance, Mr. Wayne Craighill.*"

He turned off the lights impatiently and went to bed.

CHAPTER XV

MRS. BLAIR IS DISPLEASED

WAYNE went on a Saturday afternoon in November to a matinée of the Symphony Orchestra, expecting to find Wingfield, who kept close touch with the box-office in the interest of the guarantors. Not seeing his friend at once, he climbed to the gallery where Wingfield sometimes went to study the emotions of those who, he said, got more for their money than holders of first-floor seats. Wingfield again proved elusive, but Wayne sat down on the last row and gave heed to the Tannhäuser overture. His eyes roamed the audience aimlessly; he was, it seemed, the only man in the place. He was aware, as the familiar strains wove their spell upon the house, of something familiar in the dark head before him. He bent forward slightly to make sure; but there was, he told himself, but one head like that — there was no doubt of its being Jean Morley.

She did not stir until the end of the number. Then with a little sigh she turned slightly so that he saw the faint shadow of a dark lash on her cheek. A scarlet ribbon, tied under a plain collar, flashed an instant's colour to her face before she settled herself for the next number. There was something

distinquished, noble even, in the poise of her head; and soon before the mad flight of the Valkyries it bent as to a storm. It pleased his fancy that the waves of sound floating upward surged round her with a particular intent. He was quite sure, however, that she must not see him here. He knew the quality of her anger; the ground he had gained at the parish house must not be lost. If he wished to retain her respect he must avoid the appearance of lying in wait for her. The sensation of caring for any one's respect, least of all that of this unknown girl, who had instinctively, on first sight, set up barriers of defense against him, was new to his experience. He left before the last number to continue his search for Wingfield, and found a scrawl at the box-office explaining his friend's absence, but suggesting that they dine together at the Club. Wayne glanced at the treasurer's report, made a note of the day's proceeds, and as he mingled in the crowd, found himself walking at Miss Morley's side.

"It was beautiful, wasn't it?" she said, as the crowd caught and held them. One or two women bowed to him distantly and eyed with cold interest the tall girl in the unfashionable clothes to whom he was speaking. He was conscious of this inspection of her and it angered him. He heard his name spoken by someone behind him — "That's Wayne Craighill," — as though he were a notorious character to be pointed out boldly to strangers.

"You think they liked it? It wasn't too much on one key?"

"It was lovely, but of course I don't know, I never heard an orchestra before. It probably meant more to me for that reason."

"Yes, I suppose first times bring the rarest sensations. They really did the Valkyries in great form."

"That was perfectly glorious; I should like to hear all the opera."

"You are beyond doubt a natural born Wagnerian; I must tell my friend Wingfield how well the audience took his programme. He's the power behind the orchestra, and he contends that the best is not too good, that people who never heard these things before are just as competent to criticize as trained musicians. You should hear a symphony now — give Beethoven a chance, then try the opera — on and up to the heights."

"I don't know about the heights, but I was pretty well up on the slope this afternoon, and the whole world was mine." She spoke with feeling, this girl who had never heard an orchestra before, but who had followed the trumpets to new and strange summits and still carried dreams in her eyes.

It was a gray November afternoon and he intended to make it easy for her to leave him here, under the bright entrance lights.

"I'm going to Mrs. Blair's," she explained.

"Won't you let me go along, please? You see — you see, I'm dining there!"

"Not really!"

He laughed aloud. He had lied and she was not fair game for falsehood.

"Well, I carry a key to my sister's front door and I can always have a place there."

They dropped the discussion for the moment; it was quite a mile to the Blair's and the moment was sufficient unto itself. He forgot that there could be any question of her accepting his escort. His heartbeats quickened as he found her walking beside him with a free step that fell in comfortably with his own swinging stride. She walked as people walk who are bred in a hill country — with a slight sway of the body from the hips — and she carried her head high. In imagination he robed her in fashionable raiment, a figure of distinction in any company, only to protest to himself that her qualities were superior to feathers or flounces and were as new in her as though no woman had ever possessed them before. The music still sang in her heart; she had been greatly moved by it. Before Sargent's portrait he had felt only her tyro's ineptness; but music had stolen her away from herself, and carried her close to golden lands of promise.

"How does the work go at the Institute?"

"Oh, I keep at it. I have good days and bad. Sometimes my eyes don't see straight and my fingers are sticks. This afternoon the music made it all seem easy; I think it would help if the orchestra played in our class room."

"A capital idea; I'll speak to the directors about it. Music does seem to pry us loose from the earth.

You may be surprised to know that I used to dabble at the violin myself — a long time ago. I was looked on as a promising student, and might have been a real good fiddler if I had kept it up."

"But you still play, of course?"

"Not by a long shot! I broke my fiddle on my seventeenth birthday and turned toward a business career."

"I suppose you had to do that."

"Well, it didn't seem quite square to my ancestors to fit myself to be the third fiddler in an orchestra; they were eminently practical persons. If I had kept at music as a life business very likely their shades would have haunted me and snapped my fiddle strings. But I have no regrets. I should probably have starved to death if my early ambitions hadn't been thwarted. Anyhow, I guess I'm a kind of fatalist; if it had been in the books that I was to go fiddling through the world — why, I should have fiddled. And in the same way, it was ordained that you should go in for art, and here you are, spending your days at it and nothing could head you off."

"Oh, yes; many things could! Many things tried!"

"I can't believe it! I believe that everybody has a destiny; I don't know what mine is, but I undoubtedly have it. I wouldn't have you think that because I fell on my fiddle and smashed it and lost my chance of immortality that way, I am a person without accomplishments. I would have

you know that I'm a man with a profession. I'm a mining engineer and can prove it by my diploma, and — no other way!"

His spirits were high; they talked and laughed together without restraint. He had not in a long time laughed and chaffed with a girl in this way. This walk through the dusk was oddly complete in itself; he felt no curiosity about her now, no interest in her life beyond this half-hour. Her simplicity, the frank way in which she disclosed her own ignorance, her serious belittling of her work in the art school, interested and touched him. She did not quite understand him; she was not used to his kind of banter. His mention of his youthful study of the violin she had taken soberly and she talked of her own aims to show her sympathy.

"There are so many students all over the world studying art that it seems silly for me to be wasting time over it. I had better be learning to do office work or how to sell things in a shop, or how to cook for some of these East End people, or dust rooms and wait on table. But sometimes my teachers have praised me, and that puts off the evil day when I shall have to come down to hard work and burn my portfolio ——"

"Just as I smashed my fiddle! But no! I tell you, the fates have charge of our business. They are the supreme and ultimate court — the lords of high decision. They have already fixed the fabulous prices which you are to get for your portraits. My sister will undoubtedly have you paint

hers. If you and she are friends you can't escape. Fanny's always having her picture painted."

"Oh, but I'm not so foolish as to think I could do portraits — not if I lived a thousand years. My ambition stops at pen and ink. If I can only learn to be just a little bit of an illustrator I shall be satisfied."

"Excellent! I approve of that! It's just as hard, they tell me, and the market is better! When you are not studying or helping at the settlement house or listening to music what do you do? You must have a scheme of life all worked out for yourself."

"Oh, I often go for long walks, in the afternoon — take a trolley as far as it will carry me and then strike off for the hills, and walk and walk and walk."

"I suppose you carry a sketch book to see how nature compares with the landscapes at the Institute?"

"No; landscape is beyond me; it's too big for me. People interest me more, children particularly."

"Well, of course if you want juvenile models I needn't offer myself."

"No, you needn't," she said with so crisp an emphasis that he laughed.

"But you might take me along to sit by and sharpen the pencils; that would save you a lot of bother."

"It might, but you see I use ink!"

"Then," he cried in despair, "there is nothing

left for me but to hold the bottle. Let's change the subject before you tell me I may not do that!"

They had passed, soon after leaving the concert, the Craighill house, whose lights flashed at them through the bare trees, and were now drawing close to the Blairs'. She grew suddenly silent, then stopped abruptly.

"I don't believe I'll go to see your sister now — it's so late. I'll telephone her that I'm not coming."

"You're afraid my sister won't like your coming with me, isn't that it?"

"No, I'm not afraid of your sister — she's been kinder to me than anyone else ever was ——"

"But you don't think you ought to go to her house with me. I would have you know that my sister thinks rather well of me!"

"I must not do anything she would dislike," persisted the girl.

"You think she wouldn't like your going there with me? I could leave you at the gate!"

They had resumed their walk to avoid the appearance of dallying. He had no wish to jeopardize the girl's relations with his sister; but it was pleasant to talk to her; he had never known just this kind of girl before. Her poverty, her ignorance, her ambitions interested him and set her apart. It had never been his way to hide his iniquities; he was persuaded that he meant her no harm and he rebelled against the thought that there were reasons why she should not be seen with him. His own sister had expressed this clearly enough and he did not know

what Fanny would say to him — one never knew about Fanny! — and the hope that his sister would seat Jean Morley and himself at her dinner table only rose to fade. Fanny was capable of it, but she was capable, also, of scolding him sharply before the girl and sending him out of the house.

"Mrs. Blair has a right to question anything I do. She is doing a great many beautiful things for me."

"Oh, I'll explain it to Fanny. She and I are great pals," he said lightly.

"I couldn't deceive your sister. If she should learn that you had walked to her house with me without telling her, she wouldn't like it and if she knew she wouldn't like it; so you can't know me — you mustn't know me! Nothing could be clearer than that."

"I certainly can't know you this way; that's as plain as daylight."

"There's no way of knowing me at all! You must understand that now — once and for all. I'm very busy and have my work to do."

"Well, we'll put it up to Fanny."

And so, the girl still reluctant, they entered the house, where Mrs. Blair darted out from the library with many exclamations. She seemed, on the surface, to take the appearance of her callers as a matter of course, but she waved him into the library with an air of brushing him out of existence.

While he waited he scrutinized the new books with a view to determining in just what field of

thought his sister now disported. Miss Morley's errand with Mrs. Blair was of the briefest and as they concluded their conference in the hall he appeared before them promptly. His sister's glance did not encourage his hope to carry off the situation lightly; but he could not do less then accept full responsibility for the visit and he resolved to put a bold face upon it. Mrs. Blair had just rung for her motor, and she sent the maid upstairs for her wraps with the obvious intention of making it unnecessary for Wayne to accompany the girl further.

"Fanny," he began, "Miss Morley and I have become acquainted in the most astonishing fashion. We met at Paddock's parish house not long ago by the merest chance; this afternoon, while at the concert, estimating the deficit for the day, I ran into her again; and I begged Miss Morley's consent to walk up here with her; and here I am."

"It really was unnecessary," murmured the girl.

"I think you ought to tell Miss Morley to give me just a little of her time, Fanny — just a little. Of course she is busy; but then ——"

Mrs. Blair looked from one to the other. The girl was so plainly embarrassed, Wayne's good humour and high spirits were so appealing, that Fanny Blair found this one of her most difficult occasions.

"I'm sure Miss Morley is quite able to manage her affairs without any help from me. Are you dining here, Wayne?"

"I'm afraid I intimated as much to Miss Morley so she would let me come with her; I promise never to tell another lie." He bowed in mock humility but the frown on his sister's face showed her displeasure.

"I'm going to take Miss Morley home in the motor. If you are dining here you can make yourself comfortable as usual."

"Oh, but I really can't stay! You'll have to take me along. Now that I think of it, Dick expects me at the Club."

Fanny was clearly not pleased, but he was confident of mollifying her later. The girl's plight was a more serious matter: he had taken an unfair advantage, he had put her in a false position with his sister, and he bitterly accused himself. Fanny pointedly ignored him while they waited for the motor, and he stood by like a boy in disgrace while she talked to Miss Morley about a dozen irrelevant things. He sought to save his dignity by hastening the arrival of the motor from the garage; and when the car came and he shut them in—Fanny left him to find a seat outside.

She gave him Miss Morley's address as though he had been the footman, and he climbed humbly to a seat beside the chauffeur. When the boarding house was reached Mrs. Blair descended and rang the bell herself, and when a slatternly maid opened the door Mrs. Blair stepped inside for a few minutes, that there might be no question of the sex of Miss Morley's escort.

"Well?" demanded Mrs. Blair as soon as he had seated himself beside her in the tonneau.

"Why so tragic, Fanny? Paddock asked me to come and see him and his good works — I went; he insisted that I look at his kitchen and there was your girl with the adorable head dutifully wiping the dishes — a pretty picture! Paddock was going to take her and a friend into town on the trolley, but the hour was late and I took them home in my car — she and the other girl inside, poor old me decorously out in the cold. Then I went to see how much Wagner the dear people were swallowing at popular prices this afternoon; went into the balcony to look for Dick, and lo! the adorable head was just in front of me. But no, I did not let her see me; I knew she would lose faith in me if she thought I was pursuing her; I went about my business, but on my way out ran into her again. What could be more natural than that I should walk to my sister's house with her?"

"You must have known she was going to the settlement house; it's a little hard to accept so many coincidences. And I had asked you to let her alone."

"Paddock invited me to visit him; she and her friend were cleaning up the dishes. It was her first visit, too."

"So you took her home in your car? You did that?"

"And her friend with her. Joe is a kind of usher and policeman at the settlement house. Paddock

seems to be gathering in all sorts and conditions — even me!"

"Joe!" exclaimed Mrs. Blair with more animation; and then: "You must get rid of that fellow. I don't like him."

Mrs. Blair spoke with so much energy that Wayne laughed aloud.

"Why, Fanny, Joe has saved my life many times. He's been so miserable when I went bad that I've been ashamed to face him."

Mrs. Blair relapsed into silence, and he saw by the flashes of the electric lamps at the corners that she was seriously troubled.

"You know without my telling you that you must let this girl alone. These chance meetings won't occur again — if they *have* been chance meetings!"

"I swear it, Fanny!"

"She's terribly poor; she has ambitions, and I'm trying to help her. She's utterly unsophisticated, as you can see; you will ruin her future and make her wretchedly unhappy if you don't avoid her."

"When do you think a man can begin to be good? Do you think I am so utterly rotten that no decent women may ever dare know me? Come now, Fanny."

"There are plenty of girls you can know if you want to — who don't live in boarding houses and starve their way through art schools."

"But they haven't her eyes; they don't carry their heads like goddesses," he persisted.

"You've seen too many eyes in too many divine heads. I tell you, it won't do! If you will think of it a minute you will see that only a word is enough to wreck that girl's life. Do you suppose you can call on her at her boarding house? Are you going to walk with her to her lessons? Do you quite see yourself taking her to concerts and to church Sunday mornings? My big brother, if you don't stop being preposterous I shall get angry."

"Oh, no. Please don't! I'm disappointed; I thought you had advised me to be good and marry and settle down."

"Marry! That girl? Wayne, you are impossible!"

"Very likely; but the girl isn't so impossible. I hadn't thought of marrying her, but the idea doesn't exactly terrify me. She's an immensely interesting person — she haunts me like a theme in music. She's poor and if I could save her from the pitfalls of art — the failures, the heartache of failing to arrive — that isn't so impossible, is it?"

"Yes, it's absolutely out of the question. And if you don't let her alone I'll ship her back where she came from; just one more of these coincidences and I'll do that. We've had enough marriages in the family, I hope, to last for some time."

"Ah! So this bitterness of spirit is not all for me? Has John taken to evil ways?"

"What's the matter at father's? Why was Addie crying this morning when I went in to see her?"

"I dare say she cried because you came, if you were as fierce as you are now."

"She had been crying and looked miserably unhappy."

"Probably a row with the cook. She isn't used to keeping house. She's going to Boston with the Colonel and that will set her up again."

Mrs. Blair was silent for a moment then flashed:

"How much do you see of her?"

"Precious little. Breakfast, and a glimpse sometimes as I go to my couch at night."

"You must leave the house; you must come and live with us at once," declared Mrs. Blair with impressive finality.

"Thanks!" Wayne laughed. "Do you think I tease my stepmother to make her cry? Do you think my moral example is bad for her? Addie snubs me every chance she gets. Only this morning at breakfast, while the Colonel read a papal encyclical or something equally exciting, Addie and I discussed the relative merits of country sausage and chocolate éclaires. To see me sitting at the breakfast table between the Colonel and my stepmother is edifying beyond any words. Addie is a good girl; I like Addie. But she isn't in the same class with your protégée. Here's the Club; shall I detach John McCandless from the sacred rye-pots and send him out?"

"You know John never drinks; and he's in Buffalo to-day."

"Then he will drink beyond any doubt; one must — in Buffalo!"

While he stood chaffing her at the car door, she

clasped his hand tightly and begged him to see her soon. As the car started a newsboy hailed Wayne familiarly from the street and Fanny saw her brother's broad shoulders bent over the lad and his elbow crooked as he felt for a coin. How true it was that everyone liked Wayne! His generosity was boundless; the very recklessness and extravagance of his derelictions endeared him to many. As the Club door closed upon him the newsboy dashed off with an exultant shout on the wings of new fortune.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRIP TO BOSTON

MRS. CRAIGHILL bore the scrutiny of her new fellow-citizens with dignity, and by the first of December she had ceased to be a curiosity. She had met every one of importance; even Mrs. Wingfield had been obliged to bow to her at a reception. Those who persisted in their determination to ignore her advent were too few to count. It had been hinted that she would prove loud; that she was dull; that she would make her husband's money fly — "such women" always did; but no one worth considering was willing at the end of two months to say that she was properly to be classed among "such women." Her severest critics were those who, habituated to the contemplation of Roger Craighill's presence in a front pew at church, feared that by marrying one of "such women" — they being young adventuresses headed brazenly for the divorce court — their idol might suffer the pains and penalties of scandal and alimony. Even the most conservative now admitted that if Mrs. Craighill's motives in marrying her elderly husband had not been the noblest, she was carrying herself well. Members of her own set, who had been among the original doubters, had waited for the

complete disclosure of Mrs. Craighill's wardrobe before committing themselves, but the taste and sobriety of her raiment disarmed criticism; she was not loud. In another of the circles within the Circle it was questioned whether the newcomer was fitted intellectually to be Roger Craighill's wife, but Fanny Blair vouched for the worthiness of her stepmother's interests. "Addie reads everything," declared Mrs. Blair sweepingly, whereupon Mrs. Craighill was promptly nominated for membership in the Woman's Club. Many were saying that her conduct, in circumstances the most difficult, had been admirable and the frequency with which, in these first weeks, Fanny Blair had gone about with her, advertised the completeness of the new wife's acceptance in the family. It was even whispered that Wayne had reformed, and this startling announcement, where it found credence, was attributed to his stepmother's influence.

Roger Craighill and his wife were dining alone at home the evening before the day of their departure for Boston. He had long made a point of dressing for dinner and she wore a gown he had not seen before and whose perfection he praised.

"Your taste is exquisite, Addie. I like you in light things; they seem to be a part of you — to express you. You are the most graceful and charming woman in the world."

Her face brightened. They had been dining out a great deal and it was a pleasure to have this

evening at their own table. She felt again the dignity of her position as Roger Craighill's wife. She had been hurt deeply by his exclusion of her on the night he had written his address; but she thought now how handsome he was, how well he carried his years, and it was no mean thing to have been chosen by such a man to share his home and fame. She had found it all too easy to take refuge in Wayne's ready comradeship; the stolen references to their earlier acquaintance that she had suffered him to make had shown her how dangerous it was to trust to his consolations. Wayne must be kept at a distance; she would take care that he did not see her again alone.

In this fresh access of loyalty to her husband she excused and justified his conduct in shutting himself in to prepare his address; very likely it was the way of busy men who thus give their leisure to public service. She must sacrifice her own pleasure just as he did and bring herself into sympathy with these labours of his. There was flattery in his frequent monologues on public matters and public men; she was perforce the listener, but he was older and in her ignorance it was an agreeable relief not to be expected to contribute more than an inquiry, thrown in to lead him on. She resolved to keep a scrap-book of the offerings of the clipping bureau to which he subscribed, that a complete history might be made of his public services. At Boston she expected to hear him speak for the first time; she had seen the programme of the conferences

and several men of national prominence were to make addresses.

She poured the coffee and sent the maid away, to prolong the mood of this hour. The quiet service, the substantial appointments of the room, the realization that she bore the honoured name of the man who faced her contributed to her happiness. It was pleasant to be Mrs. Craighill; she was enjoying her position in the thousand ways possible to her nature — the stir of the clerks in the shops when she appeared, the whispered interest her presence occasioned anywhere. She was, indeed, Mrs. Craighill and everyone was anxious to serve her. To be sought first by those persons who are forever seeking victims to act as patronesses; to be asked to head subscription lists; the deference shown her — these things she enjoyed with a pardonable zest and she would not jeopardize her right to them.

"As you haven't seen Boston in late years," Colonel Craighill was saying, "you will find much to interest you while we are there for the municipal conferences. Though I haven't the slightest ancestral claim on New England I feel a certain kinship with her people. If we were not so firmly planted here I should like to move to Boston to spend my last years there. Contact with some of her fine, public-spirited citizens would be an inspiration. Some of my best friends are Bostonians, friends I have made through my connection with public work. People ask me — and they will be asking you from time to time — why I spend so much

time on these movements for the public welfare; but they have been a great resource to me. I have been well repaid for all I have done. I have had my perplexities and worries, a modern business man is ground in a hard mill; but I am conscious of having done my little toward bettering our political and social conditions, and nothing in my life makes me happier than that thought. Do you know," and he smiled depreciatingly, "I heard from one or two quarters that Harvard was going to confer a degree on me next year for my work in behalf of civic reform; it was only an intimation, but one of my friends, whom I have learned to know well at our annual conferences, is a prominent alumnus, and he has remarked several times that they'd have to make a Harvard man of me somehow."

"I think it is so remarkable," said Mrs. Craighill, "that you never went to college. You seem like a college man."

"I have regretted more than I can tell you my lack of systematic education. My father was hardly more than well-to-do and I went into business at eighteen. But I have been a diligent reader; you might say that I have always been a student. It's possible that I should have fared poorly in college; my disposition was always, even when a boy, to brush away details and seek the broader view. I think I owe my success in life to that — the ability to climb upon the hills and see the lights afar off."

He stirred his coffee with the care we give in our ease to unimportant things. He was satisfied with

himself and the world; when he spoke she felt as though she were eavesdropping upon a reverie.

"It is a great joy to have you here by my side — the house has brightened since you came. If only Wayne would take the place to which he was born in the community I should not have a care!"

"But Wayne is doing well; I thought you said yourself that he was attending very regularly at the office, that he had really begun to take an interest in business."

"He's a boy of moods, poor Wayne! Just now he's going to the office every day. His cleverness is amazing when he applies himself; but let a new kind of motor catch his eye and off he goes! He's struck a new humour lately — devoting himself to the study of a lot of most complicated legal matters — contracts and the like. Such things are best left to the lawyers. But he has kept straight for some time and that's something. It's a good deal, and I'm grateful for it. I have always let him do as he pleased at the office in the hope that he would some day find something that interested him."

"He's very bright — and likable," said Mrs. Craighill. "Fanny says he's a genius."

"Fanny can see no wrong in her brother, and I'm glad of it; but she has kept me ignorant of many of his worst escapades and I have simply never been able to get near him. We are very unlike."

"Isn't that strange! I've been thinking that in so many ways you and he are much alike."

"Physically, yes; he has my build. I rather fancy that I'm still as erect as he is!"

He smiled and waited for her acquiescence, but she had been thinking intently and did not at once meet his eyes.

They had rarely spoken of Wayne; it could hardly be said that they avoided mentioning him; but his life was outside theirs; his sleeping in the house and eating one meal a day with them left him a tolerated tenant whose ways it were wiser not to question. Mrs. Craighill observed with interest that her husband seemed willing to take credit for his son's admirable physical proportions, but that his paternal pride stopped there. Her attitude toward her husband was so wholly sympathetic to-night that she saw Wayne with his eyes. It must indeed be a grievous thing to have lived an honorable life, to have made a place for one's self and to find both name and position brought low by a profligate son.

"Fanny is very happy," continued Colonel Craighill. "John is a splendid fellow — steady as a rock, and with high ideals. A woman like Fanny needs such a man to check her exuberances."

"Oh, she's most delightful and she has certainly been kind to me! She might have made it hard for me if she had wanted to."

"Oh, she's kind!" smiled Colonel Craighill, though his tone implied that allowances must be made for Fanny. "There's a good deal of the Wayne in her, just as there is in her brother." He shook his head and sighed. As they left the dining

room her husband placed his arm about her. These intimations of his secret feeling toward his children seemed to have knit her closer into his life; she felt the ground solider under her feet. She was not without her sensibilities and she had realized that a second wife does not at once wear her new robes easily. It is as though she blundered upon a stage whose scene has been set by another hand. Its mechanism, its lights, its exits are unfamiliar. She is haunted by the dread of missing her cue and of hearing a ghostly prompter's voice mocking her off stage.

"I have just been re-writing my will, and I have taken pains to eliminate, so far as human foresight can do so, the possibility of any trouble when I am gone. You will have many years beyond my expectation of life and I want nothing to mar them. It will be unnecessary for you to deal with my children in any way. I have designated our strongest trust company — a concern in which I have long been director — to administer the estate. Of course I hope your relations with my children will always continue friendly, but it is best not to mingle family interests in such a case. And now" — he rubbed his hands together as though freeing himself of every care — "now we may dismiss the future to take care of itself."

"I don't like to think of such things," she murmured. "I'm just beginning to appreciate all that you have done for me. It means more to me, Roger, than you have any idea of. You have been most kind

and considerate, and generous in every way. I have never been so happy — I never expected such happiness to come to me. It doesn't seem that I deserve it."

She sat down on a stool beside him and he took one of her hands and held it on his knee and stroked it fondly. This tenderness, keyed to the domestic tone of the hearthside, soothed and exalted her. He believed in her, she belonged to him; she wished that this hour might never end, so perfect were its peace and happiness. He talked to-night with a new freedom, and she felt the years diminish between them. He told her many anecdotes of old times in the city, describing the humble beginnings of some of his fellow-townsmen: "When I first knew him he was only a truck driver, and now!" — the familiar phrases of American biography. The hours passed swiftly. At half-past ten a motor stopped at the side door, and a moment later Wayne's key snapped the lock.

"I'll tell him to come in here," said Addie, rising. He answered her summons cheerily, and came in and stood with his back to the fire. His high spirits caused his father to eye him carefully, but Wayne, as though in answer to this silent inquiry, straightened himself and stood erect with arms folded for inspection.

"I'm off for a little trip to-night. Wingfield wants me to go over to Philadelphia with him to see a Mask and Wig show. We'll come back in three or four days."

"Are you sure it isn't a prize fight?" quizzed Colonel Craighill. "I'm always a little suspicious of Dick's expeditions. When you and he leave town I usually find there's been a prize fight at the other end of the line."

"Oh, I can't believe such things of Mr. Wingfield!" cried Addie; "he talks to me only of pictures and music. I can't imagine him watching men pound each other."

"He's a fellow of first-rate ability," observed Colonel Craighill, to whom Wingfield was a deplorable idler who had made no use of his talents. "But he has never justified his right to exist."

"Why should he work merely to please his critics? If he took a job, it would throw somebody else out. What would you have him do?" Wayne demanded.

"Our rich young men have had too much notoriety; they have brought scandal upon the city!" ejaculated Colonel Craighill wrathfully and with unmistakable application.

"You oughtn't to believe all you see in the yellow papers. Besides, Dick's about the decentest man I ever knew. He doesn't pretend to sole ownership in all the virtues. That's why I like him so well."

Colonel Craighill had frequently made these thrusts at Wingfield and to-night Wayne resented them more than usual. He turned to Addie, who had sought a book on the table and was studying the title page attentively during this interchange. She thought Wayne had not shown his father proper

respect and the disturbance of the room's tranquillity annoyed her.

"When do you head for the Hub, Addie?" Wayne asked.

"It's to-morrow night, isn't it, Roger?"

"Yes; to-morrow evening," answered Colonel Craighill reaching for a magazine.

"Dick and I spend only a few days assailing the impenetrable fastnesses of the Philadelphia mind. Is there anything special coming up, father?"

"Nothing out of the usual run; I think Gregory may come in, but you needn't trouble about him. Tell him I'll see him when I come back."

"He was in to-day, now that I think of it," remarked Wayne, thrusting his hands into his pockets, "and waited an hour for you."

"I'm perfectly aware of that," snapped Colonel Craighill. 'I was busy and sent word for him to see Morehead. He's so persistent lately that he's lost any claim he had as an old acquaintance and we'll let him face the facts squarely with our lawyer."

He spoke with considerable irritation, but he controlled himself and adjusted his glasses to read.

It was the first time that he had shown anger before his wife. She had wondered whether anything could shatter his perfect poise and affability, and his display of temper frightened her, much as exhibitions of anger in adults alarm and dismay children.

"I must get my bag; I'm holding the car," said Wayne to Addie. "I hope you'll have a fine outing."

"Wayne," interposed Colonel Craighill, "your

man Joe doesn't seem quite essential to this establishment. It seems to me we might get along with one chauffeur between us."

"Then," grinned Wayne, "you had better fire yours. Joe has been here longer, and we must stick to the merit system if the heavens fall."

"Joe's a sporting character; my man is a trained mechanic. A number of men have spoken to me of Joe's reckless driving of your machines."

"They ought to speak to me. If you don't want Joe on the place I'll move my car to a public garage."

"I'll trouble you not to speak to me in that tone. I'm not questioning your right to use the garage; I merely suggested an economy and getting rid of an idle fellow who is bound to get you into trouble."

"You don't know Joe. You couldn't push him into trouble!" laughed Wayne, with a return of his good humour. He received a reproachful look from Addie as he shook hands with her. His father rose and bade him good-bye with formality.

"We shall be gone about a week," he remarked; "my address will be the Beverly if you should wish to communicate with me."

While Wayne was packing his bag Colonel Craighill continued to turn the pages of his magazine. Addie moved restlessly about, softly opening and closing the book-cases and listlessly glancing at titles. The display of ill-feeling between father and son had spoiled what had been at the moment of Wayne's entrance, the happiest evening of her married life. If sides must be taken, she would,

of course, stand with her husband; but she was displeased that Wayne had made it necessary for her to take sides at all. Wayne's unreasonableness had caused the domestic sanctuary lamp to flicker just at the moment when it had flamed most auspiciously. With sudden access of feeling she crossed the room and laid her hand gently on Colonel Craighill's arm.

"Roger," she murmured softly, "I'm so sorry!"

"Don't trouble, dear; it's too bad you had to witness my humiliation; but it's inevitable, I suppose, that you should know."

She saw that her sympathy was grateful to him; she felt his response to it in the soft stroking of her hair as she knelt beside him. They remained thus until they heard Wayne running down stairs humming softly to himself. He stood at the door a moment later, suit case in hand.

"Good night!" he called, and as he went for his coat and hat she followed him to the door. He waved his hand to her and as the motor rolled toward the street she returned to her husband.

Colonel Craighill was again turning the leaves of a periodical, and he threw it down with a yawn.

"It must be bedtime." He paused and listened. "Isn't that the door bell? I'll go myself."

He returned carrying a special delivery letter, and opened it with a paper cutter which she handed him from the table.

"Why," he exclaimed, his face lighting, "it's from Colonel Broderick."

When he had finished reading he turned back to the beginning again, murmuring his pleasure, and read aloud:

"I had expected to write earlier, asking you to stay with us during the meetings of the conference but, in Mrs. Broderick's absence, I was afraid to assume the responsibilities of host. She will, however, be at home to-morrow so I am asking you and Senator Tarleton of Virginia to accept our shelter. I am very anxious for you to know Tarleton as he wields great influence in the South and this is the first time he has lent his countenance to our work. Mrs. Broderick will allow the three of us full liberty to sit up all night and pass final judgment on all the things that have so long been dear to you and me. I hope your annual address is good and salty; the attitude of this administration toward the civil service has been a keen disappointment and I look to you to launch a vigorous and effective protest."

"That really is a very great compliment, Addie. Colonel Broderick is one of the leading citizens — if not, indeed, the first citizen of Boston. I have always been a little afraid that he looked on my relations with him as purely official and not quite — not wholly social. You see, your Bostonians have their notions of such things, and they are entitled to what they would themselves call their point of view. Mrs. Broderick is, even more than he, the New England aristocrat, a very cultivated woman; and she was enormously rich. It is the greatest possible honour to be asked to stay there. I won't

conceal it from you, Addie, that I've rather feared once or twice, when I've been in Boston, that Broderick avoided asking me to the house!"

"Why should he?" asked Mrs. Craighill coldly.

"Well, after all, I'm a Western man, and our city has seemed — I would confess it to no one but you — to have lost its early social dignity."

"You could hardly expect it to be another Boston any more than you could make Paris of it."

"But now that the invitation has come in this perfectly cordial way, it's too bad they still look on me as a widower. They certainly had cards."

"Maybe you were not expected to understand; it's merely a matter of fact." Her words were accompanied by a smile, so slight as to be almost imperceptible, and a narrowing of the lids as she watched and studied him.

"Of course they didn't know of my marriage; you may be sure it was not by intention."

"I should say that the invitation leaves room for that doubt. The Brodericks were certainly on the list of people to whom cards were sent; I noticed the name the other day when I was looking over my calling book."

"But, my dear Addie! What motive would they have for ignoring the fact, assuming that they knew of my marriage?"

"Then, of course, if it's an error, they would be grateful to have it corrected."

She started to speak further, but bit her lip upon a renunciation of the trip. She had resolved to

see what solution of the matter he would himself suggest. He pondered a moment.

"I hope you won't misunderstand me, Addie, but I really don't quite see how I could suggest their asking you. In fact, it is clearly by intention that Tarleton and I are being brought together there quietly, and while it's a bit awkward to be asked in this way so shortly after our marriage, I hardly feel — the Brodericks being what they are and all that — that I ought to —— "

He broke off with a light laugh and a graceful outward fling of the hands, in despair of these complications.

"It would be a pity for you to miss the opportunity of visiting so distinguished a family — with Mrs. Broderick being the rare woman she is, and all that!"

"Of course there is that side of it," he agreed, with bland eagerness. He did not see that she was laughing bitterly at him. "But I really don't see how that takes care of you!"

"Oh, you musn't think of that! I should undoubtedly be bored to death. I always hate visiting; when I'm away from home I much prefer going to a hotel."

"Well, I'm not thinking of myself so much — it's whether visiting Broderick that way and meeting Tarleton in the intimate way he suggests, I shouldn't be able to effect alliances of real value in one way and another."

"Why, of course," she acquiesced with ironical

readiness. "It's a masculine affair entirely; the fewer women the better. I know nothing of such things, but Mrs. Broderick is a reformer herself, isn't she? I think I have read her name in the newspapers in connection with meetings of various kinds — I don't remember just what it was — but of course she is interested in large affairs, and must be a great help to her husband."

She broke off in a pretty reverie, wide-eyed and with lips parted — an expression that marked a fine shading of delicate mockery. "You are not going there for fun, but to aid your reform work."

"That is precisely it! I'm glad to see how you catch the spirit of the matter. If it were not that I really believe I am doing my little mite of good I should be unable to justify myself in giving so much time to these things. But, this is really awkward! It is generous of you to wish me to go ——"

"Generous? Nonsense! It's a wife's first duty to be a help to her husband. Just now it's important for you to stay with the Brodericks while you're in Boston. I should be only an encumbrance ——"

"No! I can't allow you to say that! It's merely a matter of your abandoning the trip to ——"

"To help the cause!" she supplied.

"I really appreciate this more than I can tell you, Addie. And in proof of it I'm going to take you to Bermuda for Easter."

"No, indeed! You musn't feel that I have to be bought off — that would spoil it all. You go to

Boston and get all you can out of the experience. You must remember to tell me just what they have for breakfast, and about Mrs. Broderick's gowns."

"Fancy me!" he laughed.

He went out with the note in his hand to telephone his acceptance to the telegraph office. When he had shut himself in with the telephone she laughed; a light, mirthless laugh.

CHAPTER XVII

MRS. CRAIGHILL BIDES AT HOME

WAYNE and Dick Wingfield breakfasted at the Club on the morning of their return. Notwithstanding Colonel Craighill's skepticism as to the purpose of their excursion, they had really been to Philadelphia to a Mask and Wig entertainment of University men. Wingfield had watched with interest Wayne's prolonged abstinence and wondered whether it could be possible that his friend had really reformed. Wingfield, himself most abstemious, had been careful not to place temptation in his friend's way; and he had taken Wayne to Philadelphia the better to keep track of him at a time when, he knew by experience, Wayne was likely to make one of his mad plunges.

They discussed the morning news as they ate.

"I note that your father has shot a broadside into the administration up at Boston. Here are a few yards of the speech."

"Humph!" grunted Wayne.

"Very likely you enjoyed private rehearsal of the oration, so it isn't new to you."

"You flatter me. Father's speeches are not a subject of family counsel."

"I suppose Mrs. Craighill will be a great help to your father in his public life."

"It's possible," remarked Wayne, buttering his toast. "She's getting her first taste of reform now and will, no doubt, go in strong for such things when she gets back."

"It would be a shame to reform this town; it would be so much less interesting if it turned virtuous. Really, I think I should leave the place if it got good. By the way, how about our friend, Paddock, the fighting parson? Did you know that mother has taken him up? Paddock's self-sacrifice and devotion to humanity are on the table daily at home — served hot with all meals."

"Paddock's all right. He's a good fellow, but he's overloaded with sentimentalism. I don't believe I told you I had been out to look at his joint at Ironstead."

"You did not, Mr. Craighill. Were you ashamed of me, or were you just afraid I'd contaminate the place?"

"I was afraid you would be bored. I took some risks myself, but it didn't seem decent to refuse when I'm the oldest friend he has here. It was like the chap to come to town and bury himself in the grime and filth for six months before I heard of him. But I went to his religious vaudeville, which was rather below par as shows go; but the crowd was better than the bill, and you might say, in classic phrase, that a pleasant time was had."

"Recitations, songs and that kind of things?"

"And a boxing match that almost ended in a riot."

"Dear me! I must get in on this Paddock wave. He sounds very promising. The first thing we know they'll be snatching him up for heresy and I've always wanted to know a heretic. It would be quite an experience to attend and comfort a convicted heretic in his last merry moments before they chuck him into a coke oven to sizzle for ever and ever."

Wayne grinned at this cheerful forecast of Paddock's immolation.

"They'd better let Paddock alone. He doesn't pretend to know anything about theology. He has a curious fancy that the man beast can be tamed by kindness and made to feed from the hand. It's this old brotherhood-of-man business you read about in the magazines."

"It's not unpicturesque — a fellow with a private barrel spending his money that way. I must get him to send in a few bunches of his parishioners to hear the orchestra at our expense. Our fat and waddling rich don't know a symphony from a canvassed ham anyhow. Our chief hope for the fine arts lies in people who draw their dividends in yellow envelopes at the end of a long, hungry line of the horny-handed. I'm disposed to think Paddock may be deeper than appears. I've about concluded, myself, that the people we know — the prospering Philistines we see in the clubs and in each other's houses — are a dreary rotten

bore. The human race has really been decadent ever since it dropped by its tail from the ancestral breadfruit tree and wiggled into its first trousers."

"You feel that way this morning because you had to dress in a sleeper without your usual bath. A shower will set you up. You're always rather savage when the luxuries of civilization are cut off."

"You never can tell when a man is going to need the consolations of religion," resumed Wingfield, reverting to Paddock. "Here I am turned into the forties, which means that I have crossed the summit and started down the shadowy side of the mountain. My last photographs cost me double — such a lot of retouching to keep me from looking like a wrinkled monkey. People are beginning to pick lint off of me — a sure sign of age. The seeds of mortal disease are abroad in my system. At night I often hear a stealthy step behind — the Ancient Destroyer taking my measure. I'm getting on. My old popularity as best man and light-footed usher is waning and I've passed from the active to the honorary pall-bearer list — a frank recognition of my senility. The jump from being the gay usher at a church wedding and finding aisle seats for all the prettiest girls, to marching in behind some poor devil who's gone the long road — it jolts, my dear boy!"

"That's what you get for being so respectable. I haven't had any chances to carry the white ribbons since my first year at home. My social career stopped abruptly at about 3 A. M. that morning

I cruised in from the country in my first motor and hit a bread wagon."

"The popular construction placed upon that act always seemed most ungenerous," mused Wingfield. "It was a deed of noblest benevolence, not a freak of inebriety. They are still picking up the buns you scattered from the Allegheny bridge — bread cast upon the waters turning up away down at New Orleans! I have always thought if I were to go in for that sort of thing I should attack milk wagons. They say most of our milk is impure anyhow."

"I suppose," Wingfield continued, regarding with a frown a speck of soot on his cuff — "I suppose Mrs. Craighill will have a good time in Boston watching her husband at his gambollings with the saviours of the republic."

"I dare say," replied Wayne, rising and looking at his watch. "Which reminds me that I must go up to the office and sit on the lid."

Wingfield rose at once. Wayne's recent attendance upon his office had puzzled him. Sobriety and industry, as practised by Wayne Craighill, offered food for reflection; he was afraid to comment upon this new course in the usual terms of their raillery; he refrained from remarking upon it at all for fear of breaking the charm — whatever it might be — that had effected this change in his friend. He stood at the window of the reading-room and watched Wayne disappear toward the Craighill building.

At noon Joe reported at the Craighill offices, having brought the car down ostensibly to carry Wayne's bag to the house, but in reality to make sure that his employer had returned in good order.

"I guess I'll run up to the house with you and get some clean clothes, Joe. I'll be down in a minute."

Joe, satisfied by his inspection, lingered a moment at the door.

"Well?" demanded Wayne, glancing up again.

"The widder's home, sir!"

"The what?"

"The widder — Mrs. Craighill — she's home."

This was Wayne's first acquaintance with a nickname bestowed upon Mrs. Craighill by Joe, and derived, it appeared, from Joe's pretended belief that a woman who marries a widower becomes a widow.

"Home? When did she get home?"

"Oh, she never went! She'd brought her trunk to her room to pack but passed it up."

"That will do, Joe."

As the door closed, Wayne threw himself back in his chair and stared out at the blurred sky. There was no question but that his father had intended to take Mrs. Craighill with him; the matter had been spoken of several times in his hearing; his father had called the proposed visit their wedding journey; and when he left home there had certainly been no change in his father's plans. Nothing but illness could account for it, as Mrs. Craighill had

been too short a time in the city to be subject to sudden and imperative social demands. He pushed a button and asked the chief clerk what address his father had left. It was brought to him on a tablet in Colonel Craighill's own handwriting: "Care Colonel Winthrop Broderick, Beacon Street, Boston."

On the same sheet another address had been written and scratched out, but it could be read: Hotel Beverly.

Wayne laid the tablet on the desk before him and studied it with care for a moment, then a dawning consciousness of what had happened caused him to strike the table with his clenched hand.

"Great Lord, he's ashamed of her!" he ejaculated, so loudly that he turned guiltily and glanced about to make sure that he was alone. The situation visualized itself sharply before him. Broderick was a name eloquent of wealth and social distinction. He had known one of the sons of the house at the "Tech." The roots of the Brodericks struck deep into New England soil. Wayne had often heard his father call Colonel Broderick the ideal American citizen; a Harvard overseer high in the councils of the University; spokesman for his city on many notable occasions; author of a history of his regiment, and patron of arts and letters. The Bostonian was everything that Colonel Craighill would like to be. It was utterly incredible that the Brodericks would invite a man to their house whose wife was unacceptable; nor was it a plausible theory that Mrs. Craighill would, on her own motion, abandon

a journey that promised pleasure after its attractiveness had been enhanced by an invitation which in tself conferred distinction. He had not read social ambition into Adelaide Craighill's scheme of life; what she had married for, he had honestly felt, was shelter and protection; but she was young, and to be pardoned a degree of social curiosity. She had shown no disposition to advance herself adventitiously, but here was her first opportunity to try her palate upon the unaccustomed fruits of her new life. As he pondered, with a deep frown on his face, he saw the arc of his own opportunity broaden. His father's wife had already turned to him once for sympathy; and the possibilities of sympathy in such a situation — the bright line of danger, its hazards and penalties — fascinated him as he dwelt upon the prospect. As an anodyne to his conscience he dwelt upon the humiliating plight of his father's wife, young, not without her charms and with a right to the enjoyment of life, put aside as though she were a troublesome child. It was his own chivalry, he assured himself, that rose in arms to her defense.

He drew the top down upon the disorder of his desk and was soon whirling homeward.

Mrs. Craighill sat in her upstairs sitting room, sewing. A wood fire crackled cosily; about her were the countless trifles with which a woman invites comfort and ease. The impression of smartness that Mrs. Craighill always gave was not lacking

to-day. It may be inferred that she knew her own decorative values. The subdued blue of her gown matched the wallpaper — or seemed to. Her delicate features, the soft curve of her cheek, her fair round arms, free from the elbow, the careful disposition of her hair, swept high from her forehead, were items calculated to charm any eye. She turned her head a trifle, hearing a motor in the driveway below, and her hands fell to her lap with the bit of needlework she was engaged upon. When the car passed on to the garage she resumed her work, bending her head so that her neck presented its prettiest arch to the open door. She hummed softly as she heard Wayne's step drawing near. When his voice sounded behind her she did not turn, but held up one hand, and waved it, calling a careless, familiar "hello" to his own greeting.

He walked to the fire and swung round, facing her, his hands thrust in his pockets.

"Well?"

"I didn't expect you home for luncheon. How did you leave Philadelphia?"

"Oh, I left it with pleasure; the usual way."

"I suppose the amusing Mr. Wingfield took good care of you?"

"He did. He's an exemplary person. He took me to call on his mother's relations — all a thousand years old — which is hardly what might be called devilish."

She continued to bend with a pretty gravity to her work, while he watched her, amused at the

pains she took to ignore the fact that there was anything remarkable in her being in the house; then he laughed and stood close beside her, taking one of her hands. She caught it away quickly and nodded toward a seat, continuing to affect absorption.

"Sit down, won't you? I'm very, very busy, and this is most particular work; if I should make a mistake ——"

He obeyed, studying her with pleasure shining in his eyes for a moment of silence, then broke out laughing.

"Sh-h!" She laid a finger on her lips, with a slight inclination of her head toward the door.

"Did you tell them downstairs that you would be here for luncheon? Then ring for Annie and I'll send word."

Until this was done she continued her refusal to meet his eyes. She inquired of the maid as to whether Mr. Wayne's room was in order, and when the girl had gone she dropped her needle and said carelessly, as though the matter were of the lightest importance:

"I had a cold and thought I'd better not risk the trip to Boston. You know I'm not used to this fly-by-night sleeping-car travel."

"Indeed? It's very unfortunate that you were obliged to deny yourself so great a pleasure. I thought you were not subject to colds!"

"I suppose it's the change of climate — coming here so far inland. They say it does make a great difference."

"But this is an unusually open winter; it's perfectly delightful outdoors to-day. And the sky would be blue if you could see it."

She raised her eyes to the window to verify his statement.

"I suppose," he said, without changing the key of their dialogue, "that we could keep this up for several days if it seemed necessary."

"I think so myself!" she affirmed; "it would be interesting to see how long one could go on being perfectly stupid. It's a great resource, talking stupid talk."

"The only trouble is that it's such a waste of time. There are so many interesting things to say!"

"Do you mean that you would say them? How very odd!"

She threaded a needle, with the pretty solicitude, the graceful, bird-like intentness with which a woman performs this slightest office, and he was aware of his joy in the nimbleness of her fingers, and their steadiness as they answered the quick searching of her eyes with the point of thread.

"Would you rather not refer to it at all?" he asked.

"Oh, my not going? Why should anything be said about a matter that has already been fully explained? You are a man; you have been on a journey; you have been down in the city all morning; have you nothing to say to an unfortunate slave, who has been shut up here with her needle three long days?"

"The slavery of the needle is too satisfying a spectacle in itself to admit of any coarser topic. I should judge" — and he bent nearer — "I should judge, if my dull masculine eye is competent to pass on such a thing, that your industry has been of rather recent date. You hadn't been at work on that thing all morning."

"Oh, no! But I have had ever so many other things to do this morning; this is a large establishment and the housekeeping — the making sure that there is sugar for the coffee and coffee for the sugar — takes a lot of time."

"One has always the neighbours in case of shortage. If your abandonment of the Boston excursion is a painful topic, we will drop it. Besides, I know the real reason you didn't go."

"Is it possible? Then you ought to give mind-reading exhibitions. I've begged Fanny to teach me how to do table tipping; I've heard that she's a wonder at it; and they say it runs in families."

"Have you seen Fanny?"

"Why, no! I dare say she imagines I went away. The newspapers had it that I had gone, and of course they are always right."

"Of course she will find it out; Fanny knows everything!"

"I hadn't thought of telling her; it seemed to me that this was a fine chance to get a rest — to play at leading a very, very lonely life, not letting any one know I am here by myself."

"But that has lost its point, now that I am here.

The king has gone a-hunting; the prince — if I may so honour myself — has come to defend the citadel. How do you like that way of putting it?"

"I don't think I care for it. The citadel doesn't need defending. When the king comes riding home he will find the drawbridge up and the water in the moat as quiet and peaceful as when he thundered forth to war."

"But the lady in the tower — what of her?"

"She'll be knitting — just as the king left her."

"Admirable!"

She rose suddenly, wearied of this banter, flung her sewing aside and ran from the room.

When she came down to luncheon her mood was high. She led the talk into many channels, but dwelt chiefly upon matters remote and unrelated. His being there, he was well aware, was something that the servants would not overlook any more than Mrs. Craighill's detention — when all had known of the projected journey — would pass unremarked by the shrewd eyes of the back stairs. A sense of this scrutiny, and of their being there together, gave zest to the propinquity of the luncheon table. It was an addendum to the supper they had eaten together on the night Colonel Craighill sought seclusion for the writing of his speech; it had the same quality of a clandestine pleasure, but with the element of fear eliminated. Wayne did not question that she had counted on his coming, any more than he doubted the impulse that had led him home at this unusual hour. His senses

tingled with the delight of facing her thus at the table. She poured the tea with which, she said, she always cheered herself at noon. He met her eyes at intervals, eager for the smile that rose, beyond question, from a happy heart.

In the library, where he followed her, she continued to talk gaily while he smoked.

"Well," she said after half an hour, "don't let me keep you. It must be time for you to go back; though I suppose you stay at the Club all afternoon when you lunch there."

"I don't hear the call of business shouting very loud."

"Oh, of course you must go back; it would never do for you to stay here! That would make it necessary for me to go away — to Fanny's — or anywhere."

"I don't see why we shouldn't sit here and talk all afternoon if we want to. We are at home here; we can do as we like."

"Oh, no, we can't. That is exactly what we can't do."

"But if you were to do as you like what would you propose?"

"Taking a long walk in the country — I think that would be splendid. But I should have to go alone."

"I have a better plan: take the car and go into the country — then walk! There's no fun in walking in town. The roads are frozen, so there's no mud. We could take a hamper and have a picnic."

She eyed him with incredulous amusement.

"I thought you were a bright young man, and yet you propose that? We should undoubtedly meet our pastor and all the elders in our church and I'm not a bit anxious to scandalize the community. We'd look nice motoring out the front gate together!"

"There are more ways than one of reaching the wildwood. I should take the machine myself, and start toward town; you would lightly board the trolley and ride to the end of the line; and then what would be more natural than that I should pick you up?"

"That's a delightful plan — ingenious and all that; but, my dear boy — suppose we should get smashed in the machine; then how would it look in the newspapers?"

"It would look very well in the Boston papers to-morrow morning," he said watching her narrowly. "It would serve notice on the Brodericks of your existence, which it is only polite to assume has not otherwise been brought to their attention."

"What else do you know?" she asked.

"Oh, I know nothing. I'm only guessing. As you say, I'm something of a mind-reader. They'd probably forgotten that there is a Mrs. Craighill; they invited the Colonel to their house; he thought it might be awkward to have to bring Mrs. Craighill into it — to ask to have her included in the invitation — they being so eminent — so Mrs. Craighill, being the most amiable of wives, stays at home and knits!"

"That does very well for an amateur."

"But what young woman of spirit" — he assumed an oratorical manner that suggested his father's way of discoursing upon large topics — "what young woman of spirit, I ask, left forlorn with her knitting, would tamely submit to being snubbed? Does she not owe it so herself, to her womanhood — to the sex we all revere and love — to show her resentment and seek in any fashion that may please her the solace of companionship, the consolation of Nature!"

She laughed with guarded mirth at this imitation of her husband. He had drawn close to her, and he bent down and took her hands.

"You will go, won't you? It will be just like those old times ——"

"Please don't! Run away and stand over there, and I'll tell you whether I like your plan or not."

When he had posted himself by the window, as far away as possible, she rose and went to the door, where she stood debating archly and watching him, biting her lip, tapping the floor lightly with her foot, her eyes dreamily bent upon him.

"If you will be good — very, very good — I think I shouldn't mind!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SNOW-STORM AT ROSEDALE

"YOU haven't seen the country yet; we will take a run for the hills," he said when he had picked her up. "I might have brought my little racer, but this machine is more dignified. Besides, with the tonneau curtains drawn we look like a large party."

They rode in silence at first but their spirits rose with the rapid flight and the joy of freedom. They skirted Stanwixley and were soon speeding over the hills. She wore a pretty fur toque and when the wind began to whip her free hair, he begged her not to tie on the veil she had brought, lest it spoil the jaunty effect of the cap, in which, he assured her, she looked only seventeen. Their flight into the open took colour from this thought of their youth, dancing alluringly before them over unreckoned miles to a goal where all was possible and all unknown. It had been unseasonably warm at noon, but the wind blew more coldly as the afternoon advanced. Dark clouds were massing in the West; the storm spirit, having ranged the plains and prairies of the farther West, was now preparing to pile its snow in the Appalachian valleys.

"How would a snow-storm strike you? We're likely to catch one before the day's over."

They were climbing a hill and as the heavy machine gained the windy top and a long, clear stretch of highway spread before them he looked at her and asked:

"This road leads round the world — why should we ever go back?"

"Because we are not utterly silly, and we are not going to lose our minds, I hope." But she laughed, as much as to say that nothing really mattered. "I'm hungry. It seems to me you promised sandwiches. If you did, I'm dying for food; if you didn't bring them, then I'm not hungry!"

"I like your philosophy. You'd be a good girl to seek the happy isles with — you wouldn't cry if you got your feet wet, or were lost on a desert island, or anything like that."

"I hope not — but you never can tell. I mustn't get the crying habit — nothing ages one so fast."

"I think we'd better turn round unless we really expect to be gone forever — I'm willing if you are. As to the sandwiches, I have a little surprise in store for you. It's too cold to picnic out-of-doors — how would a fire and something hot strike you?"

"Tea — most delightful of thoughts! But these farmhouses don't look inviting."

"That's where the surprise comes in. We'll run into the Rosedale Country Club and maybe we can get a fire to take the chill off before we go home. You've never seen Rosedale; it's the best thing we do in country clubs."

They were soon speeding over a private road that

led through a heavy woodland, skirting a ravine. The woodland yielded at once to a golf course at their left, stretching across a gray upland. Its targets suggested the lost banners of a deserted battlefield, and a long bunker midway of the slope the desolate grave of defeated battalions. They climbed a hill with the vale deepening at their right hand and an abrupt turn brought the club-house into view, its white-pillared façade greeting the eye with suggestions of domestic taste and comfort. A man appeared instantly as though he were expecting them, and flung open the door of a large lounging room where a great log fire crackled cheerily. A table had been set for two directly before the hearth, and while they were throwing off their wraps the man brought a tea tray with sandwiches and cakes.

"You see," said Wayne, rubbing his hands before the flames, "all the comforts of home were to be had for the trouble of a telephone message. Ah, look at that!"

A snow-storm had sprung into being without the snow's usual tentative experiments, and the wind was driving a feathery cloud across the landscape. At the ravine's edge below the veranda a few scarlet leaves clung bravely to the sumac bushes, their colour flaming in the whirling snow. Mrs. Craighill turned with a contented little sigh from the windows to the room's comfort and cheer. Their adventure, too, gained fresh quality from the sense of security communicated by the handsome room. Rosedale was a small and exclusive organization which, even at

its busiest season, gave its members almost the seclusion of a private house. Mrs. Craighill left the fire to inspect some of the etchings on the walls and came back to the seat Wayne placed for her at the table, shivering from her plunge into the arctic circle that lay beyond the reach of the fire.

"There doesn't seem to be anybody else here; is it really all our very own?"

"Do you want me to answer yes or no?" he laughed. "You saw the caretaker; he's always here and he has a wife around somewhere. We are chaperoned, if that's what you mean."

"But other people might come at any time. Do you think anybody else is as perfectly deliciously crazy as we are?"

She surveyed the table with satisfaction and began filling the tea-pot from the kettle that hummed over the alcohol flames.

"Well, if anyone comes we won't let them in — that's all! Possession is ten points of the law in this case. I thought of it first and anybody else will be treated as an intruder."

"But at the rate it's snowing we may never get home!"

"Well," he said, nibbling a sandwich, "why should we?"

"There is that question, of course! You will have tea, won't you?"

The man now brought cups of hot bouillon which, Mrs. Craighill declared, lifted their luncheon out of the plane of commonplace teas into the realm of banquets.

"Will you have something to drink, sir?" asked the servant.

Wayne glanced quickly at Mrs. Craighill.

"You can have champagne, buttermilk — anything. The cellar is excellent. I stocked it myself."

"No; we will have nothing," she answered with decision, and when they had dismissed the man, Wayne looked at her and smiled as he stirred his tea.

"I haven't tasted a drop since you came. Do you know why?"

"No; I really haven't an idea," she replied with an assumption of careless interest. She knew what he wished to say; she entertained no delusions as to his sincerity; but she wished him to say it. There was tenderness in his manner and tone as he bent toward her.

"I did it for you, Addie. It was because you came back into my life. I had been going a wicked gait; in another year I should have been all in. But the night father showed me your picture and I knew it was you he was going to marry, I made a resolution never to drink again. I have been doing pretty well, haven't I?"

"It has been fine of you; I appreciate it; I thank you for it."

"I realized perfectly why it was that you were coming — why you were going to marry my father. I had known that there must come a time when your relations with your mother would become intolerable. I knew that you had to escape from her. If you had

to be sacrificed I was glad chance was sending you my way that I might make it all easier for you. Your plight — the thought of a girl like you being hawked about — was hideous. I ought to have seen that, that summer we first knew each other; but I punished myself and I hope you felt it too, when I thought it was your mother that I was revenging myself on. And now, Addie," he concluded spaciously, "I want you to be happy."

"You are a dear boy," she murmured.

She did not interrupt him with the hundred questions that thronged into her mind. He was giving his own twist to the facts of their earlier relationship and his own escape from her mother's net; but she correctly surmised that he was deceiving himself and she was in a mood to aid and abet deception. She had drunk her tea and rested her arms on the table, urging him on with her eyes. The flame had warmed her cheeks to a bright colour and was finding and brightening the bronze in her hair.

"You deserve the best; you have a right to happiness," he went on. "I mean to stand between you and unhappiness."

"You are very good to me, Wayne!"

He placed his hand lightly on hers that lay near — and removed it instantly, afraid to risk too much. "That first afternoon, when I went home just to see you, it was because my old feeling for you had risen in me strong at the sight of you again. When you begged me to let you alone that day, I obeyed you. You had come with fine ideals of your duty and an

ambition to fill your place in my father's house worthily. You wanted to live up to his own dignity. I saw all that."

She nodded her head once or twice at the soothing combination of praise and sympathy. She waited for what further he had to say with confidence that it would be agreeable to hear. It was apparent that he had deliberately made this opportunity; he had planned their ride with this bright, glowing hearth as its goal; and she experienced the pleasurable sense of being a figure in a little drama, herself its chief character, with a setting of the stage at once adequate and satisfying.

He had always been plausible with women and he was playing the situation for what it was worth. He could almost believe in his own sincerity. He was conscious that he was managing the affair well; he even enjoyed his own speeches which he uttered so glibly that he wondered at his fluency.

"The appeal you made to me that first afternoon did you credit; it was like you. A man of iron could not have failed to be touched by what you said to me. I knew as no one else in town ever could know what you were trying to escape, and how you had set up my father as a splendid big god to worship. He was to be your strength and your refuge, and you were horror-struck at the thought of our going back to our old basis. I wanted to make love to you and you would not have it. I felt the scorn you heaped on me — it burned me like hot coals, but I waited; I waited because I knew the time would come when you would

want and need me. I knew how it would be because I, too, had knelt before the same glittering god. I'm going to be honest about all this: at first I thought it was your mother who had cheated him, and I was glad of it; then I saw that it was the other way around — that you had been deceived and cheated, and that you would have to pay for it. When I saw that that was the way of it, and that you were trusting him to end your long campaign against the world, my sympathy went out to you, and all my old feeling for you came back. You were never so precious to me as you are to-day — no one ever meant to me what you mean. You are dear to me, dearer and more precious than any words can tell you, Addie."

He had spoken rapidly, in a low vibrant voice. She made no reply, but turned her head slightly away; but when he again touched her hand she suffered him to hold it; it slipped into his palm and rested there at the table's edge.

"I understood that whole matter of your changed decision about going to Boston. It was so perfectly plain that it was funny. Father didn't want you to go to the Brodericks. To put it plainly, he's the rankest kind of snob. He was a little bit afraid you weren't quite up to their level. He had been crazy for years to be invited there, and the chance was not to be missed. He would have thrown over my own mother in the same fashion if he had played at being a great reformer in her day. I remember, when I was a child, that Fanny and I used to play with two dolls we called king and queen, and we sat

them up on a throne and worshipped them; but the king sprang a leak one day and the sawdust came out and that was the end of the king business for me. I was about fifteen when I began to find out that father was stuffed with sawdust. It came about from his title of Colonel. A lot of us boys were bragging one day about what our fathers had done in the Civil War and I had silenced the other youngsters by announcing that my father was so brave that he had been made a colonel, and one of the others came back at me the next day with news he had got at home that my father had never been in the war at all — and it was true! And all this philanthropic work and these meetings he addresses so beautifully — it all comes of the cheapest kind of vanity. It isn't the thing itself he's interested in; it's his own name in the newspapers, the glory of his after-dinner speeches at the Waldorf, and quiet committee meetings at Old Point Comfort about the time the shad are beginning to run, and when it's nice and comfortable to meet the spring down there, and issue open letters to presidents and governors about any old thing, just so it's far enough away from home. When they come round and ask father to go in for reform in Pittsburg he can't hear them talking; he sympathizes with the work, and is annoyed when the muck-raker writes us up, but press of other affairs prevents him, and so forth. The fact is that he's a coward when it comes to getting out on the firing line to be shot at. He wants the Indians in Wyoming to be protected and the Negro

to be educated, but he's afraid to go up against the gang at home. With cowardice and vanity as the chief elements of his character — bah! you see it all — you don't need to go into the case any deeper. You thought you were solving all your problems by marrying a fine, chivalrous gentleman, respected and admired by all the world, but you have already got a taste of his real character. He's begun to leak sawdust. He likes you because you are pretty and gentle and biddable, but chiefly because you listen so charmingly when he talks!"

"Wayne, Wayne, you don't know what you are saying!"

"Yes, I know what I am saying. And I know it is blackguardly for a man like me, who has led an evil life and never done a decent thing — who has been a disgrace to his honoured father and to the city he was born in, to be talking so; and I'm only saying it to you because you have already found it out — because we've both got to suffer from it. Don't imagine I'm one of those sickly asses who are always snivelling because they're misunderstood. I'm a bad lot and everybody knows it. I've been understood all right enough. Fanny tried to keep me in social countenance by sticking me down the throats of the people she knows and sees in her own house; but I'm so rotten they won't have it. The women that have to speak to me in her parlour cut me on the street. Because I was born with wild red blood in me and didn't settle down into being a fraud like himself, father took that martyr-

like tone about me with all his friends. I can hear him now mentioning me to the Brodericks and sighing softly and shaking his head dolefully to get their sympathy. You can be dead sure the Brodericks know about me; the last time I was in Boston I tore up a few trees on the common and all the papers printed our illustrious name in big red type."

He laughed a little wildly, for he had ceased to be a lover and was a man with a grievance and in his bitterness he forgot the woman before him; and his voice rang out passionately in the room. He had clutched her hand until it hurt and she drew it away, cowering in her chair to escape the wild torrent of his words.

"Please, Wayne, no more of it! You are spoiling the afternoon! It is getting dark and we must be going home."

He did not heed her but rang the bell and when the servant came he told him to bring whiskey, and to be quick about it. She expostulated while he was gone; she begged him not to throw away the advantage he had gained by his long abstinence; she threatened never to speak to him again if he drank a drop. The man brought a bottle and glasses, and said as he put it down, "That's the Rosedale special, sir; you put it in yourself four years ago."

Mrs. Craighill rose as the door closed, and made a motion as though to seize the bottle.

"Just let it alone," he said: "I want to show you something."

He filled the whiskey glasses full, and brimmed the

water glasses with the liquor, whose odour nipped the air keenly. Then he set the bottle down and folded his arms.

"Addie, every drop of blood in me calls for that stuff; I know every sensation it would give me and three months ago I would have given my immortal soul for a spoonful; but I'm just as safe from it as though it were locked up behind steel doors. No power on earth could make me touch a drop."

So long as he made love to her she understood; this bit of bravado disturbed and baffled her. But here at least was something that required prompt commendation, and while she had been better satisfied by the first direction of his talk, here was a zone of safety in which they might stand together in security. She rose and placed her hands on his shoulders.

"You are splendid; you are fine and brave and I am proud of you, Wayne, dear!"

His manner changed instantly and he caught her hands and clasped them tight. He was still breathing deeply from his long harangue, but in a moment he spoke quietly, with a return of the tenderness with which he had begun.

"I'm a beast to frighten you that way; and I must have hurt this poor little hand."

He kissed it and swung her hands lightly, looking into her face tenderly.

"What a terrible big bear you are! And everything was peaceable and cosy and you let your temper get the better of you."

The snow, still falling densely, had hastened the

twilight and night was near. "We must go — at once — at once! What if the car wouldn't run in the snow?"

"What if it wouldn't! They can give us dinner here — right here on the hearth. They can always put up something — it's the rule of the Club, and there's no end of wood for the fire."

"We are going straight home — just as straight as we can go. Please!"

She tried to free herself, but he held her hands fast, laughing into her eyes, and suddenly he put his arms around her and drew her close and kissed her full upon the lips. The firelight danced fitfully about them as they stood thus. He had raised his head to repeat the kiss, when steps sounded upon the veranda. Someone cried aloud once, twice, and beat upon the door, and when Wayne flung it open Jean Morley, frightened and sobbing, stumbled across the threshold.

Wayne plunged through the snow-filled dusk after a man who had turned away from the veranda steps and was running swiftly down the road. To his surprise the fugitive, who had at once widened the distance between them, stopped short and wheeled round.

"I meant no harm! I meant no harm!" cried a voice.

"Good God, Joe! What are you doing here?"

"Is it you, Mr. Wayne? I guess I'm crazy, that's all. I meant no harm. She'll tell you herself I meant no harm."

"We'll see about that. I told you to stay at the house. I'm surprised and disappointed in you. I'll see you about this to-night. Now go to the car — back there under the shed — and bring it out right away and take us in. And you needn't try to smash it on the way home; go in by the Red Oak road and take your time."

Wayne was not more surprised to find that his man Joe had been Jean Morley's pursuer than by the young fellow's evident distress, so markedly in contrast to his usual amiable cocksureness. It was no time for inquiry and debate. The snow was already ankle-deep and it was imperative that they start home at once.

Wayne, returning to the club-house, found Jean Morley, sitting by the fire, with Mrs. Craighill ministering to her. She had not yet recovered from her fright; her clothes were wet and her dark hair had shaken loose about her face. Mrs. Craighill appealed to Wayne for an account of what had happened, and her surprise was manifest when Wayne addressed the crumpled refugee quietly by name.

"Mrs. Craighill, this is Miss Morley." Whereat Mrs. Craighill's "Oh!" expressed rather more than surprise. "Miss Morley is an acquaintance of mine; we met" — and he smiled at the girl — "at the parish house at Ironstead where she is one of Mr. Paddock's assistants."

Jean rose, and aware that an explanation was necessary she offered it immediately, standing forlornly on the hearth.

"I had gone for a walk in the country; I have been in the habit of taking an afternoon once a week, and it was so fine at noon that I ventured on a longer excursion than usual. I took the train to Rosedale Heights, and struck off across the fields. I turned back when it began to snow, but lost my way and it was not till then that I saw that some one had followed me."

"The man who followed you was my chauffeur; is there any reason why he should be annoying you?" demanded Wayne.

"No, there is no reason; but I know him. I have known him a long time. I'm sure he didn't mean to trouble me — he wouldn't do that. I was foolish to run, but the dark was coming on and I was not sure of the way in the snow. I ran up on the veranda more for shelter and to get my bearings than in fear — I really was not afraid!"

Her hearers were struck by the fact that she seemed anxious to minimize the incident. She turned toward the door saying:

"I need not trouble you further; I can very easily walk to the station."

"Not a bit of it!" exclaimed Mrs. Craighill. "We were just ready to start and it will be perfectly easy to take you home. Is the machine ready, Wayne?"

Mrs. Craighill was pointedly ignoring him in her attentions to the girl. She was holding her hat to the fire to dry; the caretaker's wife, who had been sent for dry shoes and stockings, led Miss Morley

to her own room to change. Mrs. Craighill had been a good deal shaken by the sudden invasion of the peaceful club fireside, but she had not lost her wits. The housekeeper had been drawn to the scene, not merely for aid, but to sustain and support the two culprits of the tea table, before the bedraggled girl who had interrupted the afternoon's drama.

The spell had been broken; the arrested embrace, the defeated kiss might not be recovered at once. Mrs. Craighill placed a chair between herself and Wayne and from this vantage point surveyed him with severity as she touched a loosened strand of hair into place. They were now on the most formal footing; and he smiled slightly before the bristling bayonets with which she demanded explanations.

"Well, who is she?"

"Oh, don't be so fierce about it, Addie! I couldn't help it. She's just what I said — a girl I met at Paddock's mission at Ironstead. She's an art student; Fanny is helping her; she's one of Fanny's enthusiasms."

"Do you suppose — do you suppose she saw us?"

"I doubt it; she didn't have time!" and Wayne laughed. "But it would make no difference if she did."

"Oh, you think it wouldn't! Well, it might make a lot of difference to me — had you thought of that?"

"Why, of course, Addie, it would be unfortunate, deplorable; but there's no reason for worrying about

it. She was running from a man — the man happened to be Joe, my chauffeur."

"Then it *is* a pretty business! How do you know that Joe didn't come here to look for us?"

"Because Joe is not that sort of fellow. I know him well; he's devoted to me."

"He may have thought this was another; I don't like it. I trusted you absolutely and you have made a clumsy mess of it. And besides, you had no business to do *that* — what you were doing — you took advantage of my kindness and sympathy."

"For heaven's sake, cheer up! If the girl hadn't broken in here just at the wrong moment it would have been all right, wouldn't it?"

He was laughing in an effort to blunt the edge of her displeasure, but his attitude accentuated her anger.

"No, it would not! It was wrong and wicked of you! But what have you done with Joe?"

"He's going to run the machine home — all of us — including Miss Morley."

"Just after you caught him pursuing a helpless girl through a snow-storm in a wild place in the country! Do you mean to say you haven't discharged him? You have certainly lost your mind!"

"You wouldn't have me leave him here, would you, to walk in?"

"It might be interesting to know just what *she* was doing away out here in a storm like this, with a man following her."

"Well, that's about as broad as it is long. I don't believe we'd better go into that! She's a simple little girl from the country and our world is a big dark mystery to her; very likely she's speculating as to what you and I are doing here in a snow-storm, with all the evidences of a quiet little party — to say nothing of the whiskey bottle and all the glasses full?"

He spread his hands over the table, which was not eloquent of abstinence.

"It looks like the merriest kind of an orgy, doesn't it? And it's all my fault — every bit of it. No matter what they say, it simply does not pay to be good! Here's a whole quart of the best rye in the world, used merely to demonstrate my own powers of resistance. There isn't a man in the whole State of Pennsylvania who would believe me if I swore I had poured out whiskey just to smell it."

His hand touched one of the filled glasses; he raised it high and looked at it with a fierce craving in his eyes; then slowly very slowly, without taking his eyes from it, he put it down. She had watched him in silence, wondering; but he continued in his light, bantering tone. "As I was saying, it's all my fault. I'm guilty on all counts of the indictment. You were a perfectly helpless woman in the hands of a monster. I'm sorry, Addie; I'm just as penitent as can be; and I'm going to get you out of the scrape as fast as I can. I'll take the whole burden of it — explanations, lies, everything! Now be a good girl,

won't you, and don't let everybody know you're angry — though you *are* charming when you're ruffled."

He had persuaded her to a more amiable humour when Miss Morley returned, and she met the girl and led her to the fire with solicitous murmurs.

"We can go at once now, Wayne, can't we?"

"The car awaits your pleasure, ladies!"

"But please don't trouble about me," cried Jean. "It's only a little way to Rosedale Heights and I can take the train there and be home in half an hour."

"We can't allow it! It's a long walk to the station and we have the big motor with lots of room and to spare."

"It was the oddest chance that brought us here," Mrs. Craighill went on to say, as she held the girl's cloak. "Mr. Craighill had taken me to call on some friends who are spending the winter at their farm beyond here. It was later than I thought when we started and we ran in here to telephone home that we should be late for dinner."

It was a sufficient explanation, blithely uttered; Wayne, bringing his stepmother's things to the fire, hoped she would not protest too much. The matter of the whiskey bottle, for one thing, was a part of the *res gestæ* which it seemed best to leave to the mercy of the trial judge.

Night had fallen when they left the club-house and the forward lamps of the car cut a broad path of light over the snow. Wayne adjusted one of the movable seats in the tonneau so that he faced the two women,

and turned on the electric light. The thing had its ridiculous side; the pains Mrs. Craighill was taking to be polite to the girl struck him as funny; but by the time the car reached the highway more serious reflections engaged him. Jean Morley's account of her walk afield was plausible enough and he did not question it; he wondered whether Mrs. Craighill's story had carried equal conviction. An effort to assure himself that it was not important what the girl thought, found him looking straight into her eyes, whose gray-blue depths and sorrowful wistfulness seemed more fathomless than at any of their previous meetings. Her knowing Joe, the ball player and chauffeur — the man who now guided them home — added a puzzling factor; they were utterly irreconcilable characters. His glance rested first on one woman and then the other as he unconsciously compared them — Mrs. Craighill, trim and smart, with the girl, whose shabby, discoloured gloves, her plain little hat with its rumpled feather, her cheap coat, were vesture of a different world. Only an hour before he had kissed the one; he had held her unresisting in his arms; she was pretty, charming amusing, but the glow of the afternoon had paled; their adventure had ended on a frightened, smothered half-note.

He had been checked in the course he had marked for himself; whirled out of the straight current into the labouring waters of indecision. He had resolved upon an evil thing; he had hoisted sail and steered for the rocks, but the plunging depths might not

be so attainable after all! That potential superstition, latent in us all, and to which strong men are often susceptible, teased him with questions as to why this girl had walked into his life. There, too, was Paddock, the clerical sentimentalist. Only a little while before Paddock had crossed the threshold of his office and struck down, in effect, the cup with which he was about to consecrate his life to evil things. It is the way of the guilty to take counsel of omens; the knocking at the gate in Macbeth is the loud beating of every conscience-struck heart. Wayne's imagination played upon the figure of Jean Morley, drifting through the storm to the remote house where a woman, weak as he was weak, yielded herself to a kiss he had calculated in coldest reason.

The occasional glances that Mrs. Craighill vouchsafed him meant his dismissal, for the time at least. It was plain from her conduct that the ground here lost might not easily be regained; but he was surprised to find in his brooding that he cared so little. Addie's pique was absurd; but he had kissed women before and they were prone to magnify the gravity of their indiscretions, and to sulk afterward. His thoughts traversed a circular track, but the fire had gone out in his blood. Rousing from his absorption suddenly he found Jean's eyes bent upon him, wondering, pitiful and sad. He had not heeded what the women were saying to each other, but now Mrs. Craighill asked him where they were and he looked out upon the lights of the city.

"Shall we take Miss Morley home first?" he asked.

"Dear me, no! She must stop and have dinner with us. Better than that, won't you stay all night with me, Miss Morley? It's still snowing and it will be hard getting about town to-night. You see, your knowing Mrs. Blair makes it seem that we *all* know you."

CHAPTER XIX

MR. WINGFIELD CALLS ON MR. WALSH

WAYNE not appearing at luncheon, Wingfield ate alone and then watched the street traffic from the Club window with listless interest. Across the street rose the grimy façade of Memorial Church, its spires piercing the fuliginous cloud the wind was blowing across the city. A battery of automobiles discharged a party of young people bent upon a wedding rehearsal, and Wingfield sighed softly as the girls fluttered out of sight through the church doors. Shortly afterward he left the Club and walked slowly in the direction of the warehouse of the Wayne-Craighill Company. Wingfield was given to roaming and frequently sauntered through the jobbing district, dodging the clattering trucks, noting the destination of merchandise and dropping in upon friends in their counting rooms to exchange anecdotes and question them as to the state of trade.

His business this afternoon was to call on Tom Walsh, whose silhouette he presently observed at a window of the counting room on the second floor of the Wayne-Craighill Mercantile Company's establishment. A truckman bawled to him to look out for himself as he entered the main door where, in a

small room, a number of gentlemen were gathered about little tables containing specimens of coffee and the agent for a California canning factory was opening his "line" for the enlightenment of the chief buyer of the house, a person who, with his last summer's straw hat tipped over his eyes, spent his days trying to reconcile the pictured peach of the label with the fruit inside the can. A boy, engaged with marking pot and brush in decorating a soap-box with cabalistic characters, stopped chewing gum and whistled to a comrade to give heed to the strange being who had entered the front door and was now ascending the counting-room steps. As Mr. Wingfield was careful of his raiment, his manner of gathering up the skirts of his ulster on the stair, and the fact that he wore spats, caused the artist and his comrade to exchange signals of derisive delight. As Wingfield disappeared into the office, an inquiry as to "what the old man would do to ut," was shouted across the warehouse beneath him.

When Walsh had kicked the door shut and offered Wingfield a cigar, he went to a sliding window in the partition of his den and gave orders for a few minutes to his chief clerk on the other side; then he returned to his desk and lighted a cigar.

"Well, I'm glad you came in; I was just thinking about you. How's Wayne?"

"All right; we spent a few days in Philadelphia and he was as good as gold. He's been sober for nearly three months."

"Then he's overdue," remarked Walsh. "He

usually comes down with a jar when he's let it alone so long."

"He's been at work, too — as regular as the clock. Your retirement from the office seems to have had a stimulating effect on Wayne's energies. How do you account for it?"

"Um. Maybe he wanted to see what's inside the pot. He got me up there one day last week and put me through a cross-examination that gave me the headache. I noticed that the boys in the office jump when he comes in now; they didn't use to know he was there."

"New stepmother doing it?" asked Wingfield.

Walsh looked at the end of his cigar carefully and smoked quietly for a few minutes before replying.

"He's deeper than that; Wayne has a game on hand. His conversion is too sudden. He's saving up like a volcano. He'll let go one of these days and there will be hell. I don't like it."

"Maybe he wants to make money and get rich," suggested Wingfield.

"And maybe — maybe," replied Walsh contemptuously, "he wants to buy airships so he can call on the man in the moon. I don't know what it is, but the signs point to trouble."

Walsh took off his hat and caressed his bald head. Then he threw up a section of his glass cage that looked out upon the street and bade a truck driver stop beating his horses. He dominated his establishment like the captain of a ship, his office serving as a bridge. A clear tenor voice, singing a

ballad, rose from the wareroom below. Walsh touched a button and when the chief shipping-clerk appeared bade him discharge the singer at once.

"Chuck him! I warned him myself I wouldn't stand for it."

"I hope it's the one that guyed my clothes as I came up," said Wingfield. "My spats seemed to pain him; he was painting things with a brush."

"He's the one," growled Walsh. "I'll let his voice rest for a week and then I'm going to put him on the road. He's the likeliest colt on the place."

"Fire him first, then promote him?" asked Wingfield.

"Yep. But I don't make a fixed rule of takin' 'em back. Fired the office boy last week and he'll stay fired — hung a couple of these 'Get Busy,' 'Keep on smiling,' signs over my desk. Well, where's Wayne now?" he demanded.

"He went to his office this morning after breakfasting with me and didn't show up at the Club for lunch — he'll probably be there for dinner — there's nobody at home, you know. The Colonel took his bride to Boston to hear him deliver his oration."

"Mrs. Craighill went to Boston?"

"Why, certainly."

"I guess not," said Walsh; "she's home — hasn't been out of town."

"Wayne didn't know it; he thought they both went."

"They didn't; I'm quite positive. Very likely Wayne didn't know. They may have intended

going together and then something happened and Mrs. Craighill stayed at home."

"I didn't know you were so thick with the family. One might think you and Mrs Craighill were on telephonic terms of intimacy."

"No; hardly that. I haven't heard from her but I know she's in town. My information may be private and exclusive; I guess most likely it is."

"Where does that leave us?"

"It doesn't leave us anywhere; it just brings us to the starting point!"

It was hot in the glass box and Wingfield fanned himself with his hat. Since the night of Mrs. Blair's reception, at which he and Walsh had spoken of Wayne with a common understanding and sympathy, Walsh had been much in his thoughts. Wingfield was a student of character and it pleased him to think that in this grim, bald old fellow he had discovered a type. Walsh's traits were of a sort to appeal to him and now that he was learning that Walsh gathered information through secret and mysterious channels, his liking warmed to admiration. It was precisely this sort of thing that Wingfield liked to do himself. He took off his ulster and drew his chair closer.

"Do you mean ——"

"I mean that Wayne and Mrs. Craighill should not see too much of each other. They are both young and foolish. The Colonel is a good deal wrapped up in himself; one roof isn't big enough to cover an elderly husband — an important, busy

man — his young wife and a youngster who's a past-master at the business of jollying women."

"But Wayne has a sense of honour; there's a place where he would draw the line."

The cashier brought in the bank deposit which Walsh surveyed carefully. When the man had gone he lighted a fresh cigar and when it burned to his satisfaction he laid a broad hand on Wingfield's knee and said:

"We seem to understand each other. I don't talk much, neither do you. This is all on the dead level, is it?"

"You can trust me. What we say here is strictly between ourselves."

Walsh nodded in sign that the compact was understood.

"You and I can't quarrel over Wayne's good qualities nor over his bad ones either, for that matter. If managed right, he'd be a fine, big, manly fellow. The Colonel never knew how to handle him. We spoke of that up at Mrs. Blair's that night. You've noticed that Wayne's going to the office now and that he's been straight ever since the Colonel got married. A change like that doesn't just happen; you've got to account for it. You haven't accounted for it, have you? Well I have! He's got the idea that the Colonel hasn't treated him square. The Colonel's rubbed it into him pretty hard and often — not by roasting him and that sort of thing, but in a thousand worse ways. He's made the mistake — and I'll be damned if I think the Colonel knows it himself —

of posing to the boy as a pattern of what *he* ought to be. All this God-and-morality business — these speeches about the wickedness of politics in Jupiter and that kind of thing — make the boy tired. It's worse than that: he wants to catch the Colonel napping and prove him a fraud! It's a devilish sort of thing — you don't like to think of it; but that's my explanation of this sudden devotion to business. The thing's in his eye; he's looking for spots on the sun."

Wingfield caressed his gloves gently. Walsh smoked hard.

"I don't believe it's in him. He's as sweet as cream inside and wholesome and clean. The thing you suggest wouldn't be possible in the Wayne Craighill I know," and there was rebuke in Wingfield's tone.

"Don't misunderstand me. I'm for the boy all the time. I wish to God he was mine! He'll wobble right some day, but just now that's what he's up to. And there's a little more at the back of my head —— Not ready yet," he called to a clerk who had entered with a mass of correspondence. "Wait till I ring. There's that; and that woman up at the house gives him another chance at the Colonel; I see you flinch at it, but he's out for revenge — he's been getting ready for it for a long time."

"No!" ejaculated Wingfield sharply. "I don't believe it — it's beneath him. We don't understand each other at all if you think Wayne Craighill capable of anything so low, so base, so utterly despicable."

He took off his eye-glasses, swung them the length of their gold chain, and glared at Walsh when he had replaced them.

"I should take the same view if I didn't know some things that you don't. I don't question Wayne's honour, but it's no stronger than his sense of justice, and it's the injustice that rankles and the feeling that the Colonel isn't above magnifying his own virtue at the boy's expense."

Wingfield nodded in affirmation, but his astonishment grew at the wide range Walsh's thoughts had taken.

"You imply that there are circumstances that confirm your impression that Wayne and Mrs. Craighill are not suitable companions for each other?"

"I imply nothing as to the future, or the present either, for that matter. What may interest you — and this is entirely in confidence — is the fact that Mrs. Craighill knew Wayne before she knew the Colonel!"

Walsh thrust his hands deep into the pockets of his office coat and chewed his cigar. He was no pedlar of gossip and Wingfield saw that he had not parted with this piece of information without a wrench.

"How did he know her? Was it bad or good?"

Walsh shook his head, and compressed his thin lips.

"I guess it was all right. He might have married her himself if the circumstances had been quite normal, but he found that they were trying to railroad him into it, and he backed water."

"They?" queried Wingfield.

"Um," answered Walsh, looking out upon the snow-storm that raged in the narrow street. In the windows over the way blue shaded lamps in other counting rooms were lighted, and he rose to turn on his own. Wingfield saw that beyond the simple statement of fact Walsh would not go. Walsh was troubled. The light of the desk lamp sought out the deep lines of his face; his small gray eyes narrowed. Outside the door several of the clerical staff wondered at the length of the interview accorded by their chief to the tall gentleman with the dark beard. The fact that the shipping clerk's assistant had been dismissed in the midst of the call had sent a cold chill through the establishment: the old man, it was whispered, was out of sorts, and his state of mind they attributed to the malign influence of the tall person in spats.

"Of course the Colonel didn't know," suggested Wingfield.

"No; and that works into my general idea of what Wayne's up to. Wayne had risen to the same fly but they failed to hook him. When he saw the Colonel about to swallow, bait and all, he lay low. It was the kind of thing he wanted. It tickled him to see the Colonel make a mistake."

"You think the Colonel was trapped. He's an old hand — he knows the world. He must have had a lot of chances to marry women of position and wealth."

Walsh rubbed his face raspingly with his thick fingers.

"When a man's sixty or thereabouts any woman that plays the game right can land him. If she's young and pretty and naturally smart, he's fruit — simply fruit! A vain man is the easiest mark; tickle him a little and he'll goo-goo. We're all chumps where the women are concerned, Wingfield; they nail us every time. The Colonel was bound to walk into the trap. Lord, man, even I've had 'em after me! A few yards of crêpe coming in to ask my advice about managing their property; sympathy gag; helpless woman; no one to appeal to; comes to Tom Walsh because of his success in business, his reputation for being square and so on. Now that I'm down here alone and the impression's abroad that I'm a solid citizen, they're looking me up rather more freely. While I was with Craighill the Colonel got all the crêpe. Now I'm getting my proper share of the business. They jolly me about my horses and say they think it's so fine for a man to have some form of recreation. I tell 'em I always drive alone! But the Colonel shied at the widows, grass-fed and otherwise, and married a woman nobody ever heard of before. He probably thought he was doing a smart thing to cut out the local crowd. I guess Mrs. Blair wouldn't have let him marry anybody in town. He did well, according to his light. The reel's wound up and the fish is in the basket."

"I fancy we're neither of us deeply concerned about the Colonel; it's Wayne we'd like to help; am I right?"

Walsh nodded gravely.

"I don't think the woman is a bad woman. I went up to Mrs. Blair's that night at the rash expense of a white waistcoat just to look her over. She's pretty and friendly. I don't suppose she's buncoed the Colonel any more than he's buncoed her. It's about even. She struck me as being kind of pathetic, someway."

"Ah! I hadn't noticed it," remarked Wingfield. "She struck me as a young person who would take care of herself. They're an interesting type, these young women who corral old gentlemen of established position and wealth. The Colonel must have a fine estate; he's made money ever since he inherited the Wayne fortune and he's never lost any."

"Um!"

This grunt of Walsh's was discouraging. Wingfield's own reticence had been admired, but Walsh's was even more opaque; he felt that the old fellow was a hooded falcon who could, if given free flight, penetrate far into the mystery that surrounded Mrs. Craighill.

"I guess we might call there to-night," Walsh continued. "I'm not on to the social game, but I suppose that, having had the Colonel's announcement cards and having met the bride at Mrs. Blair's, it's up to me to call. As I have no official knowledge of the Colonel's absence I guess I'll drop in to-night and it wouldn't be a bad idea for you to come along. You can dine with me at the Club. Do you put on a white vest for evening calls or will a black one do?"

The proposed visit was not to Wingfield's taste.

Wayne had distinctly told him that Mrs. Craighill was in Boston with her husband, and in the circumstances for him to call at the house with Walsh, of all men, would be an event whose implication would not be wasted on a man of Wayne Craighill's sharp perception. He was averse to going; the very idea was repugnant; but Walsh clearly wished his company and he finally agreed to go.

"Very well, I'll arrange the transportation"; and Walsh dismissed him with an injunction not to break his neck on the office steps.

CHAPTER XX

EVENING AT THE CRAIGHILLS'

MRS. CRAIGHILL had not relaxed her severity toward Wayne when, with Jean between them, they sat down to dinner. She continued, however, her protecting attitude toward the girl, whom she had installed in the best of the guest chambers adjoining her own room. Any doubts that had crossed her mind as to the extent of Wayne's knowledge of the young woman had been dispelled by Jean herself. She had sought eagerly for any basis for suspicions, but Miss Morley was apparently all that she pretended to be; and Wayne's own manner at the table set the seal of truth upon his protestations of merest acquaintance as uttered at the clubhouse. The girl interested Wayne and it was, Mrs. Craighill divined, the interest of novelty; she was of an order of woman that had not heretofore attracted his attention. And seeing his absorption, noting the pains he took to be entertaining, Mrs. Craighill's glances in his direction gained nothing in amiability. He imagined that she wished to punish him for having been caught in the act of kissing her; and his acceptance of the situation, and his cool appropriation of the girl whom she had brought home merely

for the purpose of placation, added to the blackness of his offenses.

The talk, as led by Wayne, fell into lines that served to minimize Mrs. Craighill's importance in the trio. She did not care about magazine illustration, or know very much about Claude Monet; and Miss Morley's ignorance of grand opera, and her naïve preferences in the music she did know called for nothing but occasional smiles of polite indulgence from Mrs. Craighill. Wayne was making far too much of the girl; it was unnecessary and unbecoming. Her poverty, proclaimed in her shabby clothing, her lack of ease, her deficiencies in a hundred other trifling ways irritated Mrs. Craighill. But if the girl did not know how to manage her artichoke she was not dull. When she became aware of her hostess's silence she made a point of including her in the talk.

It was an event in the girl's life, this hour at the prettily set table, with its bowl of roses aglow in the soft candle-light; the silent service; the leisure born of plenty and secure from the clutch of time. Her awe passed. Mrs. Craighill had been kind and Jean was taking her kindness at its face value, and in apparent ignorance of its ulterior intention. She saw in Mrs. Craighill a woman of the ampler world, whom the gods had favoured with good looks and fortune, and Jean studied her with an artist's eye. Adelaide Craighill's head, so admirably set on her pretty neck, had never pleased any one more. That half-languorous droop of the lids that withheld the full gaze of her eyes for sudden, unexpected, flashing

contacts, was not without its fascination. If Jean Morley interested Mrs. Craighill, Mrs. Craighill interested Jean Morley even more.

Jean's frankness, now that her diffidence had passed, revealed her in a new light. Wayne had never placed her, never found an adequate background for her. In their several meetings he had been satisfied with what the moment disclosed. A reference to her fondness for walking served to open a long vista, which his fancy crowded with pictures.

"I was born and brought up in the hills," Jean said, "but a long way from here. I don't belong in the soft coal country — my home is in the anthracite region. I never was here before, and probably shouldn't be here now if it weren't that I'm able to spend the winter in study at the Institute. I think I like my own country better than this; I have never been in cities very much. Just a few times I have been down to Philadelphia to look at the exhibitions. I should have spent this year there, but I came here, for several reasons, and now the winter is going so fast and I have so little to show for it."

"You can't do it all in one winter," Mrs. Craighill remarked sympathetically.

"No — and you can't do much in many winters! I'm not a genius — I know that as well as anybody; but I want to make the most of my little talent. Bad pictures seem so much worse than anything else — worse than bad music even. It's better not to start if you've got to go on forever being an amateur."

"Well, one has the fun of trying," murmured Mrs. Craighill. She had seen American students abroad on their eternal pursuit of fame, and her words were lightly shaded with her forbearance of all hopeless aspirants.

"Did you always fancy pictures and drawing?"

"I'm afraid so! It seems absurd to speak of my things at all to people who know — to those who have seen the great galleries abroad. But I used to pick up pieces of charcoal and try to draw when I was a child, and I never seemed able to give it up. I would bribe the little neighbour children to pose for me; the boys who worked in the breakers were nicer to draw because if I smutted my picture it didn't matter — it made it all the truer to life. When we had the last strike up there in my country"—she called it "my country," as though it were detached and alien and Wayne liked it in her—"a lot of newspaper correspondents came to report the troubles, and I suppose if it hadn't been for the strike I should have lost my courage and given up trying. But I was sketching some of the children in town one day with charcoal on wrapping-paper and one of the newspaper men asked me to give him a few souvenirs. I had a whole trunkful and he helped himself. He sent them off with an article called "The Children of the Breakers" and it came out the next Sunday in a Philadelphia paper with my pictures. The artist on the paper sent me some ink and paper of the kind used in black and white work and then a check came for twenty dollars. That helped to spoil me; and

then I heard of a free scholarship here and when I came Mrs. Blair, who's on the Students' Aid Committee of the Institute, was kinder than any one else had ever been; she's been lovely to me!"

"Mrs. Blair is splendid to every one — so enthusiastic and helpful. You are fortunate in having her for your friend."

It was in Mrs. Craighill's mind that if the girl should tell Mrs. Blair just how she came to be dining at the Craighill table the story might require elucidation. Fanny Blair believed her to be in Boston, and from Boston to the Rosedale Country Club was a far cry. Her irritation at Wayne increased: he had certainly made a mess of things; and his absorption in the girl, his ready transfer of interest, did not mitigate his offense. She was not in the least interested in Jean Morley's studies in black and white, and she was considering the advisability of anticipating the girl by telling Fanny Blair the Rosedale story first, in a way to protect herself. The prospect did not please her. She had a high opinion of Fanny Blair's intelligence, which caught at truth in zigzag lightning flashes of intuition. And while she considered these things, Jean Morley, whose character was not involved, described the landscape of the upper Susquehanna with almost childish enthusiasm and Wayne, who had no reputation to lose, listened to her with an attention that would have been excessive if paid to a first visitor from Mars.

Mrs. Craighill preceded them slightly as they

sought the library. Her fine carriage, her short, even step, the train of her gown that swept after her detainingly — these trifles added to Jean's impression of her hostess as a finished product of the fashionable world.

Before the blazing logs in the library Mrs. Craighill rallied again, touched to pity by the sight of Jean's shoes, borrowed of the housekeeper at Rosedale, which, as she placed her own dainty slippers on the fender, seemed to shrink in their own humility out of sight under the girl's crumpled skirt. Wayne threw up a blind to observe the weather and called them to see the snow, which lay white under the electric light of the streets and had transformed the hedge into a stern barricade of white masonry. The jingle of sleigh-bells stole in upon them as they turned to the fire.

The storm served a distinct purpose in eliminating from the possibilities the chance of interruption. People had been in the habit of dropping in in the evening — it was an attention that Colonel Craighill liked; but as her departure had been duly gazetted by the society reporters it was hardly possible, Mrs. Craighill reflected, that anyone would brave the storm merely to leave a card at the door.

By half-past eight Mrs. Craighill had begun to be bored, and it was upon this trying situation that the maid entered with Wingfield's and Walsh's cards. These gentlemen had found a sleigh for the journey and the tinkle of bells in the carriage entrance cheerfully preluded their arrival.

Their appearance had been accomplished with so much expedition that before Mrs. Craighill could hand the cards over to Wayne the two gentlemen were within the library portières, rubbing their hands at the sight of the blaze and exhaling an air so casual and amiable as to disarm suspicion.

"It was Walsh did it," began Wingfield. "He took me for a sleigh-ride and when I complained of being cold he said we'd go into the Craighills' on the chance of finding somebody at home. It's always Mr. Walsh; you never can say no to him. I've undoubtedly contracted pneumonia and they'll be pumping oxygen into me before daylight."

Mrs. Craighhill introduced Miss Morley, and Wayne's astonishment at seeing the men hardly exceeded his surprise when Walsh, turning from Mrs. Craighill, spoke Miss Morley's name distinctly and shook hands with her.

"I have met Miss Morley before," he said, and sat down by her.

"You see," Mrs. Craighill was saying, "the papers tried to send me to Boston, but here I am, and glad not to be up there in the blizzard."

"Nothing could be cosier than this! That is hickory; there's a particular charm in hickory, but my mother will have none of it; she sticks to pine knots."

Nothing had escaped Wingfield's keen eyes; but the sigh with which he settled himself was half an expression of relief. The presence of the third figure in the scene satisfied him of the baseness of

Walsh's assumption, and added, moreover, an agreeable novelty to the call. Mrs. Craighill was a clever woman; his interest in her increased; he paid her the tribute of his sincere admiration. As to the girl's identity, he could wait. As he discussed current social history with Mrs. Craighill he appraised Jean with a connoisseur's eye. Wayne had been tinkering the fire, and when he rose he sat down between Mrs. Craighill and Wingfield.

Walsh, his face reddened by the wind, was giving his attention to Miss Morley, and the others caught only occasionally a word of their conversation.

"So your grandfather's still in town? I supposed he would be going home before this."

"He's waiting to finish up the Sand Creek matter. He wants to know what is going to be done about that before he goes back. It's worried him a great deal, and he feels that he must press it now while he can. He's an old man, and not well. I've tried to get him to abandon it altogether, but it's on my account he's doing it. He wants to get the money for my sake, but I'm afraid he will only be disappointed."

"Have you ever seen Colonel Craighill yourself? Do you know what he says to your grandfather?"

"Only that he puts him off — he never really tells him anything."

"Um!"

Walsh rubbed his bald pate reflectively. The trio nearer the fire were well launched in frivolous talk. Wayne seemed in excellent spirits; Mrs.

Craighill had entered into the spirit of Wingfield's banter with zest, and Wingfield was enjoying himself immensely.

"I didn't know you were acquainted with the family in this way. Does Wayne know?" continued Walsh.

"It's just an accident, my being here. It was Mrs. Craighill's kindness — I had never seen her before; and Mr. Wayne Craighill I knew, slightly. I met him at Ironstead, at Father Paddock's settlement there."

Walsh bent closer, as though he had not understood, and when she repeated her last sentence he drew his hand slowly down his cheek.

"Um! Is Wayne going in for that kind of business? I hadn't heard of it."

"He was out there one night when Father Paddock had an entertainment. Mr. Craighill brought me and a friend of mine home in his motor."

Walsh found a handkerchief and blew his nose vigorously. When he had settled his pudgy frame back in his chair he asked abruptly:

"What do you think of him?"

"Why — I don't think!" said the girl, and her laugh reached Wayne — her light laugh of real mirth that had the ease of a swallow's flight.

"Are you afraid of him?"

"No; I'm not afraid of him. We're hardly acquainted. I've only seen him three or four times."

"Oh! The meeting at Paddock's place wasn't the first?"

"No. I had seen him before — the first time at the Institute; you know I'm studying there."

"He didn't hesitate to speak to you without an introduction, did he?" persisted Walsh, though with a good-humoured twinkle in his little eyes.

"No, Mr. Walsh, he did speak to me, but it was all right. The circumstances made it all right."

He was amused by her readiness to defend Wayne, who was just then chaffing Wingfield about something for Mrs. Craighill's edification, wholly unconscious that he was being discussed.

"They always do," said Walsh.

He turned round in his chair so that he looked directly into the girl's face. There was no insolence in his gaze; it was merely his direct, blunt way of looking at anything he wanted to see. His eyes were not satisfied with surface observations; they bored in like gimlets. Jean met his scrutiny for a moment and turned away; but Walsh's eyes dwelt still on her head, then he glanced toward Wayne, then back to Jean again. He seemed satisfied with this inspection and asked her how she was getting on with her studies. When she had answered, his "Um" was so colourless that she smiled; his mind had been on something else all the while.

"Your grandfather had never talked to Wayne about the Sand Creek affair, I suppose?"

"Yes," she replied with reluctance; but on second thought she answered him fully. In spite of Walsh's gruffness and his grim countenance, people trusted him. His sources of information were many because

he never betrayed a confidence. His mind was a card catalogue. If an obscure corner grocer at Johnstown mortgaged his home to buy an automobile, Walsh knew it first. The office systems that Roger Craighill delighted in installing had always annoyed Walsh. Now that he was managing his own business his office was conducted with the severest simplicity. He checked his own trial balances; he would, without warning, throw up a window and demand of a startled drayman the destination of a certain crate or cask, to which he pointed with a sturdy, accusing forefinger.

It was not for Jean Morley to withhold information from Tom Walsh; it seemed the most natural thing in the world to be imparting it.

"These people have no idea that I am related to Grandfather Gregory. Mr. Wayne Craighill has no idea of it; Mrs. Blair doesn't know it — she knows me only officially, you might say; she's on a committee of the Institute that looks out for young women students who have no homes here. It's strange that I should have fallen in their way; and now I'm here in Colonel Craighill's house! It wouldn't do for grandfather to know that — it would make him angry. But grandfather talked to Mr. Wayne about the Sand Creek Company matter just a few days ago. Colonel Craighill wouldn't see grandfather; he sent word to him that he could do nothing and that he'd better see a lawyer. Mr. Wayne met grandfather leaving the building and took him back to his own office. He was very

friendly and offered to help arrange a settlement; but grandfather refused. He's very indignant at Colonel Craighill and says he's going to make him settle. It's because he's known him a long time — many, many years, I suppose — that he's so bitter. He says it isn't the money now — it's the injustice of it."

The girl had spoken eagerly and she paused now and turned to see if the others were observing them. She concluded in a lower tone:

"I don't know about it; it may not be a just claim. I sometimes think grandfather isn't sane on the subject; he acts queerly and keeps coming to town to see Colonel Craighill. I went with him to see you in the hope that you might tell him to quit bothering about it. He didn't understand that, having been with Colonel Craighill so long, you wouldn't want to discuss his affairs, now that you have left him. And you couldn't do anything about the claim — of course."

"Um! I couldn't do anything for your grandfather; that would be bad faith to the Colonel; but — Um! — I might do it for you. That would be different!"

He looked at her kindly, enjoying her mystification.

"I will tell you this, just as a favour to you and because — because you are not afraid of Wayne Craighill; I'll tell you that the claim against the Sand Creek property is good in law. Wayne knows it; the Colonel's lawyer told him so; but the Colonel is so high and mighty that he doesn't want to pay

any attention to it. He's a great negotiator, the Colonel; he wants to wait until Mr. Gregory gets real hungry, then fix it up with him in a large spirit of generosity — do the noble thing for an old friend in adversity. But this is treason, young woman, right here in the Colonel's own house. Your grandpa had better take Wayne's offer. I think we'll move over there with the others."

He rose in his heavy fashion and Wingfield, who had been waiting his opportunity, sat down beside Jean. Wingfield's face showed the least annoyance when, a moment later, having seen that Mrs. Craighill and Walsh were taking care of themselves, Wayne drew in beside him.

"It's well you joined us; we were about to say the most dreadful things of you, weren't we, Miss Morley? But now we'll discuss the diplodocus in the museum, the greatest of Pittsburg topics. Mrs. Craighill has just been telling me of your studies. Can you enlighten me as to whether you students of the graphic arts really take an interest in music — and the other way around? I have my doubts of it; one art's enough at a time."

"Oh, the students at the Institute all go to the concerts because they like music and it helps. I went to the Wagner matinée and it quite inspired me; I wasn't so bad for several days."

"Ah, you were there at that matinée! I had expected to go myself, but my nerves had been screwed up like a fiddle-string by the rumour that the harpist was threatened with a felon on her thumb;

I couldn't have stood that. The troubles of an orchestra are innumerable, I assure you, Miss Morley. I'm always bailing out some fiddler who has beaten his wife. And the oboe is a dreadful instrument; they say men who elect it as their life work always go insane: the strain of piping into so small a hole bursts blood vessels in the brain. Think of a man giving his whole life to perfecting himself on an instrument that sends him, just as he pipes his most perfect note, to a mad-house for his pains."

"For mad-house you might substitute jail," remarked Wayne. "The oboe is not my favourite instrument."

"You don't know an oboe from a parlour melodeon. Please don't take Mr. Craighill's musical criticisms seriously, Miss Morley. He and I are on the programme committee — perhaps it's only fair to the rest of the community to say that we are it! We wrestle with the conductor about what we shall give the dear people, and because we don't give "request" programmes every time with Sousa and Beethoven hashed together, the newspapers jump on us hard."

When at ten o'clock the door closed upon the callers, Mrs. Craighill declared that she was tired, and carried Jean off to bed. Wayne understood perfectly, however, that he was to await Mrs. Craighill's further pleasure, and he lighted a cigar and made himself comfortable before the fire. In a few minutes he heard the murmur of her skirts on the stair, and she entered quickly with accusation

in her eyes. He rose and leaned against the mantelshelf. She was very angry in her pretty, pouting way. She flung herself into a chair and broke out at once:

"What do you think of *that?* Wasn't the girl enough without those two men? The most hateful, hideous persons I ever met!"

"But, Addie, you don't suppose I asked them here? You've got to be reasonable about this. The girl *was* unfortunate; but if we hadn't picked her up we should have been in a box if these men had come here. It strikes me that we're in the greatest luck."

"But why did the men come at all? That man Walsh doesn't go to people's houses; he's a malevolent old fellow; he has the most dreadful eyes I ever saw. And your friend Wingfield, how often does he call here in the course of the year? I doubt if he was ever here before. You told him I was away, didn't you? Please answer me that!"

"Why, yes, Addie, I believe I did," and he paused blankly. There was no doubt but that he had told Wingfield of Mrs. Craighill's absence that morning when he fully believed that she had gone; but that fact only added plausibility to Wingfield's story that he and Walsh had been driving and had dropped in for a brief respite from the storm. Wingfield did the most unaccountable things; this was undoubtedly one of them. Having said as much, he felt that the matter might be dropped, but the evidence in rebuttal was immediately thrust upon

him. Mrs. Craighill picked up four visiting cards and held them out for his inspection.

"They asked for your father and me at the door — I called the maid upstairs to ask. Why do you suppose they did that if they just came in here to get warm or to see you?"

"My dear Addie, it's as plain as daylight that they were driving; that Wingfield — it's just like him — got cold, and Walsh suggested that they come into the house to get warm; and Wingfield — well, you simply don't know Dick — he's the most formal person alive. And when you come to think of it he did the right thing in asking for everybody. If we were all in Egypt and Dick stopped at the house to warm himself he would leave his cards. He would have a feeling about it; Dick's a fellow of nice feeling; and besides, it would only be decent to the servants. Please don't worry over this! You're attributing motives to those fellows that are beneath them. Do you suppose they would have turned up here to-night if they had thought you and I were just sitting here playing checkers together. Not on your life, Addie! And assuming for an instant the preposterous idea that they came thinking we were alone, why, they must have felt pretty cheap when they found that you had a young lady guest in the house. There's nothing to trouble over, I tell you."

"I like your cheerful way of disposing of the whole business! It doesn't seem to me so easy as you think. Did you ever hear of those men

going calling together before? I don't believe you ever did."

"Well, there are lots of things I don't know about Walsh, and Wingfield, too, for that matter. Dick's always studying somebody. He's as bad as Fanny for fads, though he chases his in gum shoes; and just now he thinks he's struck a new type in Walsh. Oh, Lord, but it's funny! It's a cinch that Walsh has Dick under the microscope. Those fellows going sleigh-riding is too sweetly pastoral for any use. It's enough to make Walsh's thoroughbreds laugh."

Mrs. Craighill shrugged her shoulders and her eyes brightened with a rekindling of her anger, coloured now by what seemed to be a genuine fear.

"Wayne," she cried, "what is there about that man? He's an evil being of some kind. That first time I saw him at Fanny's he affected me just as he did to-night. I have a feeling of suffocation, of smothering, when he looks at me and those little eyes of his dance like devils."

"Oh, now, Addie, that's coming pretty rough! Walsh is a bully old fellow. He can't help not being handsome, but he's the real thing; there's no punk in Tom Walsh. He's a rare fellow and he's been mighty kind to me. You'd better forget all this — it's all right. That girl can be relied on — she isn't going to blab — why should she? And Walsh and Wingfield are not out on snowy nights looking for a chance to injure anybody. Don't work yourself into a morbid frame of mind about these things; we all had a good time and let it go at that. Why,

old Tom Walsh made a point of talking to you; he isn't the fellow to bore himself, I can tell you!"

"Oh, Walsh!" she wailed. "That hideous monster! What do you think he has asked me to do!"

"Well, not to elope with him; I'll wager he didn't propose that."

"He asked me to go driving with him! He said there would be such sleighing to-morrow as we rarely see any more. He said he would show me the hills and that I'd see we had winter scenery here just as good as Vermont."

She offered this, it seemed, as a last proof of Walsh's depravity, and having launched it in half-sobs she waited for Wayne to mitigate its evil if he could. The laughter with which he greeted her announcement added an unneeded straw to her burden and she wept bitterly, bending her head upon the mantel-shelf. She was an effective study in grief, but Wayne's humour had been too sincerely touched to leave any room for pity.

"Oh, Addie! Walsh asked you to drive with him! He asked you — he asked you ——"

He exploded again, but when, tearful and scornful, she turned toward him, he subsided to demand:

"Well, what did you say?"

"Oh, I said I'd go! I was afraid to say no!"

CHAPTER XXI

SOUNDINGS IN DEEP WATERS

SHE left him abruptly and ran up to her room. He lighted a cigarette and pondered the rapid succession of events that had so filled the afternoon and evening. He tried to find a natural explanation for everything, but the effort left him vexed and confused. He had reasoned with Mrs. Craighill plausibly enough, but the appearance of Walsh and Wingfield had been extraordinary; it was wholly unaccountable, and he did not like it. That these men should be spying upon his actions passed belief; but what did this odd alliance between the men argue? He roamed the rooms restlessly. All was silent above. Under the same roof, here in his father's house, were two women, unrelated and irreconcilable, pointing him to different paths. He flashed on the lights in the dining room and leaned in the doorway, gazing at the empty table and recalling the dinner hour. Jean Morley had sat there; the soft overhead light had fallen like a benediction on her head; her grave voice still sounded in his ears, her questioning eyes still spoke to him when, turning off the lights, he stood a moment staring into the dark.

Then he struck his hands together and went to

the back hall whose windows looked toward the garage. The lights were burning on the second floor and passing out through the kitchen he ran across the snowy court and up the rough stairway to Joe's room.

Joe lay sprawled on his narrow iron bed with his face to the wall. The room was lighted by a single electric lamp that hung from the low ceiling. He sat up and rubbed his eyes as Wayne spoke to him.

"What's the matter, Joe? Are you sick?"

"Well, I wasn't feeling very well. I guess I got a cold."

"I came in to speak about your behaviour this afternoon. You were annoying a young woman out there at Rosedale; you must have been following her from the time she left town; she is a friend of my sister's and I've got to explain to both of them just how you came to be frightening a woman in that fashion. What have you to say for yourself?"

Joe threw his legs over the side of the bed and shook himself together. He passed his hands over his face wearily.

"Oh, my God, I don't know! That's what I've been lying here thinking about ever since I brought you home. I don't know why I did it. I meant her no harm. She and I were friends together up in the anthracite country where I come from. We went to school together; I've known Jean a long time."

"That doesn't give you any right to scare her to death. I ought to fire you for this. It puts me in a nice position, having my chauffeur running after

one of my sister's friends. If she should tell Mrs. Blair what you did you'd have to go. My family are not so warm for you, anyhow."

"Yes; I know that. The Colonel doesn't like having me round, and I guess you don't need me; but you don't have to bounce me; I'll quit. I guess I'm all in. I'm no good, anyhow."

His dejection was complete; his tame submission blunted the edge of Wayne's wrath.

"This isn't a good job for you; there isn't enough to do. You say"—— He hesitated. Many questions as to Jean Morley thronged through his mind; but the girl was a guest in his house; he could not seek information about her from a servant. Joe, as though divining his thoughts, straightened himself suddenly.

"She's a fine girl; there ain't a finer in the world. She ain't like me — she's smart, she's got ambition and she'll make good. You don't need to think because I followed her that I meant any harm to her. I'm watching her; I'm looking after her. If any man means any harm to her I'll kill him; yes, by God!"

"Don't be a fool; you seem to be the only person that's trying to injure her," replied Wayne coldly. "Just another such performance as that of this afternoon and you'll give her friends cause for wonder."

Wayne had spoken quietly, for Joe was utterly unlike himself. He was either ill or drunk and Joe's record for sobriety was flawless. The chauf-

feur rose now and pointed an accusing finger at Wayne, crying out huskily:

"I want to know why *you're* takin' so much interest in her! I'd like to know what she is to you! She's not for you rich chaps that think you can get any poor girl you want with money! I tell you, Mr. Wayne Craighill, you can't have her. If I can't have her, nobody can. Now, you remember that; remember it or it'll be the worse for you!"

"Shut up, you fool," cried Wayne, closing the door. "You needn't shout to the whole town. Now, I'm done with you; I want you to clear out; I don't want to find you on the place to-morrow."

"What you're doing," cried Joe, not heeding, but intent upon some train of thought of his own — "what you're all doing is to try to jolly that girl so she'll keep old man Gregory off of you. I know about that business — how the Colonel swindled him and lied to him. And now it's your sister, and now it's you and the Colonel's wife that's trying to fool her. It's rotten, it's rotten, the way you've all of you treated the old man."

Wayne sat down on the single chair in the room. He was quite calm, for it was clear that Joe was really ill; the fever shone in his eyes and his voice was hoarse and strained. But there was something here that required explanation.

"Sit down, Joe, and stop shouting. You seem to be about half out of your head. Now what has Miss Morley to do with old man Gregory and how do you come to know him and his affairs?"

"How do I come to know?" Joe, huddled on the edge of the bed, stared stupidly.

"He's Jean's grandfather — her mother's father. They live up there in Denbeigh. Old man Gregory used to live down here; he had a little mine in the Sand Creek district, and ran it himself, but he couldn't make it go. Then the Colonel got it away from him to put into the combine. He told the old man it was no good anyhow, but to help him out he'd pay him something down and more on the tonnage if they ever opened it again. See? Gregory had run a grocery on the side and bought goods of the Wayne-Craighill Company away back there. But the old man thinks the Colonel handed him the chilly mitt. And now the old man knows he is about all in and he wants to get what's coming for Jean. And he'll play the game out — he's that kind. Every time he's got ready to land one on the Colonel the Colonel side-steps — he side-steps, see? And Gregory's a fine old gent that everybody's robbed all his life. And if you didn't know he was Jean's grandfather, why have you all been chasing her — what's she to you, say?"

Joe had flung much scorn into his recital — the fine scorn of his kind, with much use of the stiffened right arm and hand by way of gesticulation.

"This Gregory matter is none of your business, but to straighten you out a little, I'll tell you that this is the first I knew of Miss Morley's relationship to Gregory. As for my sister, I doubt if she ever heard of Gregory. Her interest in Miss Morley is pure

friendliness and good will. And my father has never heard of Miss Morley, I'm sure of that. I'm telling you this not because you are entitled to it, but because you've always been a decent fellow and if you know these people it's just as well you should have the straight of it as to our treatment of them. If old man Gregory has a just claim against my father it will be paid; and Miss Morley has nothing to do with it. And if you weren't sick I'd give you a thrashing for speaking of that young woman as you have. I ought to do it for your outrageous conduct this afternoon anyhow. That's too rank to be overlooked."

"Well, you let her alone, you let her alone; that's what I say! I saw you walkin' with her; I followed you that night you took her home from the concert. I tell you, you can't do it; you can't do it! It's all right about what you've done for me; I ain't forgot it, and I ain't goin' to forget it. But you can't have her; you can't have her! And I'm goin' away from here; I ain't goin' to work for you any more."

Wayne rose to the spur of his own dignity. He could not be placed in the position of accounting to a half-delirious servant for his attentions to a young woman. He looked down at the crumpled figure on the bed contemptuously.

"You poor damned fool," he said, and walked slowly toward the door.

He had not been in these upper rooms of the old barn since he had played in them as a child, during

the reign of a favourite coachman. He glanced about for traces of the old times. There was an old-fashioned bureau between the windows littered with Joe's humble toilet articles. Photographs of mighty lords of the diamond were tacked to the walls. With his hand on the door, Wayne's glance fell upon the framed likeness of Jean Morley — a face younger than that he knew and sweet with the charm of young girlhood. The eyes met his; the lips smiled wistfully. He bent his head slightly and went out.

Joe crossed to the window and pressing his face to the cold pane watched Wayne running swiftly toward the house. Then he drew down the shade and snatched the picture from the wall. He gazed at it long and earnestly, with awe and wonder and fear alight in his eyes; then he restored it to its place with shaking hands and crept back to bed.

CHAPTER XXII

A CONFERENCE AT THE ALLEQUIPPA

ON THEIR return to the Allequippa Club Walsh and Wingfield sought a quiet corner of the smoking-room and sat down to take account of their adventures, Walsh with a steaming hot whiskey before him, Wingfield with his usual glass of koumiss, which he sipped sparingly. They were silent until Walsh's cigar had begun to burn satisfactorily. It was he that spoke first.

"That little Estabrook mare has good wind; I never tried her in the snow before. There's zip in her legs, all right."

"It was a good idea of yours, the sleigh-ride. I wish I had your knack of telling a horse from a goat. The beasts they always sell me wouldn't make good glue."

"Um."

A proper interval was necessary to set the mare apart from other subjects, and they played with their glasses.

"She's a little brittle — 'Fragile; handle with care,'" remarked Walsh presently.

Wingfield blinked behind his glasses.

"That mare — oh, no, I see!"

"That woman up there. She's like glass — bright, tolerably transparent, and easily smashed."

"I don't know about her being so transparent. It seems to me she's pretty clever — a little subtle, maybe. She doesn't seem to have been anybody in particular, yet she landed the Colonel with an artificial fly."

Walsh shook his head.

"You're in wrong. *She* didn't land the Colonel. She couldn't have done it. She wouldn't have had the nerve. An older hand played the line and made the cast; but she was the pretty fly, all right."

"Well, of course I didn't know," replied Wingfield humbly, wondering again at the ramifications of Walsh's knowledge.

"Should you say she had the come-hither in her eye?"

Wingfield had spoken lightly, but he was rebuked by the unmistakable displeasure in Walsh's face. The old fellow shrugged his shoulders but when he spoke there was kindness in his tone.

"She's kind o' pathetic to me. There's nothing hard in her. As I said, she's like glass, and when that kind break it's just get the broom and sweep out the pieces, that's all. But I don't like to hear the tinkle of broken glass. There ain't much satisfaction in seeing human nature topple and fall off the shelf — men or women. The strong ones, the heavy pottery, can drop hard and roll some; clay's coarser; but these weak ones — it makes you sick."

Walsh was silent for a moment, then, seeing that he had checked Wingfield, he asked:

"How did the situation up there strike you?"

"It was proper enough — quite beautiful and domestic. I don't suppose Wayne ever spent a whole evening at home before in his life. How do you explain the other woman — a sort of chaperone rung in to improve the looks of things?"

"It doesn't make any difference how she got there; that ain't our business; but I felt better when I saw her there. She's a good girl; she's all right."

Walsh's omniscience would have annoyed Wingfield if he had not so greatly admired it. It seemed that Walsh not only possessed much information as to the private affairs of the Craighill family but that his knowledge covered also the casual stranger within the Craighill gates.

"Who's the girl?" he ventured carelessly; and Walsh's "Um" seemed for a moment to have been interposed as a rebuff. But Walsh stirred his glass slowly and replied:

"It certainly beats hell how things come around. That girl's grandfather is one of these old fellows that ought to have been rich if he'd had any sense. He owned a lot of coal land around here years ago but he swindled himself out of it in one way or another. He got cleaned out down here and moved up into the anthracite country where he never did any good. He's got a claim against the Colonel on account of a coal mining company that the Colonel took over and merged with a lot of other small concerns about ten years ago. He and the Colonel were old friends, and Gregory, this Morley girl's grandfather, thought the Colonel so great and good

that he wouldn't do even a blind and deaf and dumb beggar in a horse trade. The facts were that the Colonel, being smooth on negotiation and an impressive party to send out to make deals, was 'used' right along by the fellows he was in with. The Colonel didn't know he was doing the other fellow half the time — it was so easy and his associates told him what to do. Gregory was practically the sole owner of the Sand Creek property; he had worked it himself and failed to make any money, and the Colonel offered to take it into the combination just as a favour to an old friend. They wiped out the old Gregory company — took over the stocks and bonds — but the Colonel made a personal agreement with the old man, as a sort of sop, that at the end of ten years, if coal should be mined in the property, he should be paid a royalty. There was no contract — he wrote a letter about it. Well, they're working Gregory's property all right — found a lower vein, and it's fine coking coal, which they mine economically through the old workings. The Colonel is only a figurehead now in the new corporation — his name looks good when they want anything done at Harrisburg — see? And the real powers in the company can't hear Gregory — don't know anything about the Colonel's promises — say the agreement was made without authority — and there you are."

Walsh breathed heavily and lighted a fresh cigar.

"If it was a personal agreement, of course it's no good if the Colonel won't see it! But we don't

expect the Colonel to do that sort of thing — the soul of honour and all that!"

"The soul of punk and piffle!" grunted Walsh. "Mr. Wingfield, it's worth remembering that we're all human beings — poor, damned, stumbling sinners, even you and me. The Colonel's a good man; he means well, but he hasn't any more influence with that corporation than the waiter who pours soup in this club. In all these corporations Craighill's in, they don't pay any attention to him except when they've got something that he can do, like appearing before investigating committees and that sort of thing. He hardly remembers that he ever knew Gregory, and his lawyer has interpreted that agreement to mean coal mined on the property as it existed when it was taken over — which doesn't touch the lower vein. Do you get the idea?"

"Didn't the Colonel know about the lower vein? And didn't Gregory know?"

"I doubt if Gregory knew — he dates back to the time when anybody with a pick and coal scuttle could go into bituminous around here. He'd been a preacher or a school-teacher or something like that, and really didn't know mine-run from Easter eggs."

"So it's not a business proposition strictly, but a matter of personal morals — which is far more interesting. Thank you for the information. The Colonel interests me deeply; he presents rare psychological problems. This incident confirms one of my impressions concerning him — that he's not an acute person, and that he might even go far wrong

— through his vanity and conceit — and be utterly unconscious of it."

"Um."

"And the girl?"

"Oh, the girl's down here studying art. Mrs. Blair seems to have taken her up. Just how Mrs. Craighill got hold of her I don't know, but it isn't important. I could see it in Mrs. Craighill's eye that she was glad the girl was there. The girl and her grandfather were down to see me the other day about the old man's claim, but I couldn't give him any encouragement. An old chump like that oughtn't to have any. I don't pose as a philanthropist, Mr. Wingfield, and it wouldn't be loyal to the Colonel, considering the long years I spent with him, to give comfort to his enemies."

Walsh lifted his head virtuously and lost himself in a prodigious cloud of smoke. Wingfield, watching for a reappearance of the heavy, inscrutable face, could have sworn that he saw a smile curl the old man's thin lips.

"Oh, of course! You have always been loyal to the Colonel. Nobody would question that."

"I couldn't do anything for Gregory, the poor old ass, but I gave the girl a tip to-night to tell him to go ahead."

Wingfield, with his elbow on the table, stroked his beard. Walsh was really the most interesting person he knew.

"Well, she's a pretty girl, and I don't blame you," he remarked, leadingly.

"All girls are pretty," growled Walsh. "But she seemed sensible and she has fine teeth. By the way, I'm going to take the madam out driving to-morrow. I made a date with her to-night. You see, the Colonel won't be home until the next morning and — well, you don't get a snow like this every winter — no-siree!"

Walsh poked the lemon peel in the bottom of his glass with a spoon while his announcement sank into Wingfield's consciousness.

"I must say that you have your nerve! Have you ever appeared in public with any woman since you came to town?"

"Nope; but it is time I was beginning. I like Mrs. Craighill; she's the wife of my old employer and I'm an old man and she's a young woman. If I can't take her driving behind the best roadster in Pennsylvania I should like to know why! Besides, if she's driving with me she ain't in any mischief. I guess I'm safe!"

Their eyes met; it was perfectly clear to Wingfield that Walsh had asked Mrs. Craighill to drive with him merely to occupy her time and to impart to her a sense, thus delicately conveyed, of his espionage.

"She's not stupid; she knew why I asked her to go," said Walsh, chewing his bit of lemon peel. "It made her hot. I was afraid for a minute that she would blow up; but she didn't dare. She's afraid of me."

Wingfield was trying a new medicated biscuit,

which the Club kept for his benefit, and Walsh took one and ate it slowly. He seemed unusually well pleased with himself.

"What do you think Wayne will do to us?" asked Wingfield.

"Nothing; he'll not say a word. The joke's on him, and when he takes a second thought he'll be much obliged to us."

"It was rather raw — our doing it. That Morley girl *is* pretty, isn't she — something really noble about her?"

"Um! Too bad the art microbe's in her system. She's too good for that," and having disposed of Miss Morley's ambitions, Walsh rose and shook the trousers down on his fat legs and declared that it was time to go to bed. Wingfield lingered at the table speculating, over a fresh bottle of koumiss, as to the means by which Walsh had learned that Mrs. Craighill had abandoned the Boston trip.

Above, in his own room, Walsh re-read the telegram which had brought this information, re-read it several times, in fact, and then tore it into many pieces which he flung into his grate fire.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE END OF A SLEIGH-RIDE

IT PLEASED Mrs. Craighill to breakfast in her sitting room the following morning. Wayne, finding himself deserted, drank his coffee alone in the dining room, with the newspapers for company. His father's chauffeur sent word to the house that Joe was sick and Wayne ordered a doctor summoned before going to his office.

Mrs. Craighill had spent a bad night and no very pleasant thoughts had visited her pillow. The preceding day had been the most disagreeable of her life. She felt herself shut in and trammelled in a thousand ways. The snowy vesture of the urban landscape disclosed by her windows, the renewed and purified world that lay bright in the full glare of the winter sun, awoke no response in her heart. In her prettiest of morning gowns she seemed to Jean Morley the loveliest and most fortunate of beings; but to her the girl was only a reminder of yesterday's untoward events. Jean's steady, grave eyes, tranquil from restful slumber and her freshness — the glow of her skin from the bath, her appearance of zest for the new day's business — only irritated Mrs. Craighill as they sat at the tiny table that had been improvised before the sitting room fire.

One thing must be done and done quickly: Mrs. Blair must be advised of her presence in town. She must plead illness as her excuse for not having gone to Boston. Before the breakfast was finished she went to the extension telephone in her bedroom and called the Blair house.

"Mrs. Blair is not at home. She went South last night with Mr. Blair. His mother is ill in Georgia and they left in a hurry. They didn't know when they'd be back."

This information, conveyed by Mrs. Blair's maid, was only half a relief. Here was still Jean Morley to reckon with; and it flashed upon her at once that the girl was now essential to her. She returned to the sitting room and concluded her breakfast. Her manner was decidedly more friendly. When Jean rose to go she protested cordially.

"Oh, you have been very good to me! I have enjoyed this visit more than I can tell you, Mrs. Craighill. And I am sorry to put you to so much trouble. I was very silly yesterday and made a lot of fuss that wasn't at all necessary. I usually do better than that. I hope you won't think the worse of me for what happened."

"You dear child, of course I shan't," cried Mrs. Craighill, seizing her hands. Her spirits lifted as she saw that Jean was intent on her own plight; that probably she had been thinking wholly of the strange figure she had made in her flight to the club-house, and that the fact of there being anything

unusual in the presence there of another woman and a man had not occurred to her.

"Such a thing is likely to happen to any of us," declared Mrs. Craighill, laughing. "And there we were — Mr. Craighill and I — just as lost and forlorn as you were! It was so silly of us all to get lost in the storm that I think we'd better not tell anyone about it — don't you?"

"You may be sure I'm not proud of my part in it," declared Jean; "but I must send back the housekeeper's shoes, and get my own."

"Oh, don't think of it!" exclaimed Mrs. Craighill, to whom, in the new confidence established between them, a mere item of shoes seemed the most negligible thing in the world. "I'm going to get you to accept — please! — a pair of shoes from me — a souvenir of the occasion — and I'll see that the borrowed ones get back to Rosedale."

"Well ——" began Jean, taken aback by Mrs. Craighill's animation.

"Of course these shoes must go back; and we'll have the shop send up a lot for you to choose from this afternoon. And now I'm going to ask a great favour of you, Miss Morley. I don't like being alone, and I wish you would come and dine with me again to-night; I shall very likely be all alone — you know my husband is in Boston, and Mr. Wayne is very uncertain. We can have a fine, long evening together. You know I'm just a little bit jealous that Mrs. Blair has a share in your work, and here am I, quite on the outside!"

"I shall be very glad to come," said Jean; "only, it will spoil me, so much splendour! I'll have to go down to my boarding house from school, but I'll come here late in the afternoon."

"That is very dear of you. If I'm not in when you come you will be expected; and do make yourself perfectly at home. That strange Mr. Walsh has asked me to drive with him in the park this afternoon — he's a great horseman, you know, and an old friend of Mr. Craighill's. I'm just a little afraid of him; but he really means to be kind, don't you think so? He seemed very much interested in you last night — he told me you were very nice — there!"

"He's very interesting and very kind, I think. He and my grandfather know each other. I'll come, then, about five."

Mrs. Craighill sighed heavily as she saw the girl depart; but after all, things were not so ill. The absence of Mrs. Blair was nothing short of providential; and Jean Morley seemed the least suspicious of young women. Very likely, by the time Mrs. Blair returned, the girl would have forgotten the meeting at Rosedale and what, Mrs. Craighill asked herself, with an access of virtue built upon the cheerier mood in which Jean had left her, what was there to awaken suspicion in any mind? Wayne she had ceased to consider at all; his conduct had been unpardonable, and she was well rid of him. It did not matter whether he came home to dine or not; if he appeared she would punish him by with-

drawing early, with her guest, to whom his attentions had been so marked, and leave him to his own devices.

Her grievance against her husband for leaving her behind, for reasons that were in themselves an insult, hung darkly in the background. She was aware that she never could feel the same toward him; in her heart she had characterized him in harsh terms that repeated themselves over and over in her mind.

She had received a brief note from him, pencilled on the train, and a clipping from a New York paper with the programme of the Boston meeting. He had missed her, he said, and would be glad to be home again. (There was a little sigh, she knew, that accompanied such a declaration as this, implying weariness of public cares and a longing for the peace worn warriors crave at their own firesides.) The clipping she placed on his dressing table; the note she tossed into the fire contemptuously.

She dressed before luncheon for the drive with Walsh, and found to her surprise that the thought of going with him had grown less hateful. Even if he had undertaken to watch her, it was rather interesting that one had to be watched. Her husband had sacrificed her on the altar of his own vanity without the slightest compunction. The dignity of life, the fine security and chivalrous protection which she had expected to gain by her marriage had faded into nothing.

She put on her hat and coat and waited for Walsh

at her sitting room window, and punctually at half-past two his cutter whirled smartly into the grounds and round to the porte cochère. She took account of his burly figure and his sturdy arms holding the taut reins over the spirited, graceful animal he drove. His cap, drawn low on his head, made him almost grotesque.

She was about to run down, to save him the trouble of ringing, when the maid brought her an immediate delivery letter that had just been left at the door. She glanced at the superscription and clutched it in her gloved fingers for a moment before opening it, as though at truce with bad news. It was a letter of length in a woman's hand, loose and scrawling as though by one distraught. Mrs. Craighill raised her veil and read; or rather she caught at the sentences which seemed to dart at her from the paper:

"I was never so outrageously treated in my life. The idea that my daughter's husband should be ashamed of me! I hope you will not misjudge me — you have not always been just with me; but I only did what was entirely proper. The fact that he thought I had gone abroad after your marriage had nothing to do with it, though he seemed to think it strange you hadn't told him of any change of plans. It was none of his business. . . . I mailed him my card and a line that I would like to see him. I read in the papers that he was at the Broderick's, and your note told me that you would not be here. Why you didn't come I still don't understand. I sent my card to him and waited a

day. Then on the afternoon of the second day I went to the house and asked for him. Oh, you needn't curl your lip; I tell you I don't intend to have him ignore me in that fashion. They told me he was resting, but I wasn't to be put off. He came down and was decent enough at first; then said he had to be excused as he was to speak that night and needed rest. I held him long enough to tell him that I had got tired of waiting for an invitation to visit you and that I was coming down right away. He said that you were free to do as you liked about having visitors; that he supposed I was in Italy. I mildly suggested that I was a little short of money, and he shut up like a clam. A lady — I suppose it was *the* Mrs. Broderick you hear so much about — you know we saw her three years ago in Paris — passed right through the hall and he never so much as offered to introduce me. I expect to leave Sunday night and spend Monday in New York and be with you Tuesday. This gives you a day or two to bring him around ——"

"Mr. Walsh is waiting," announced the maid.

She thrust the letter into a drawer of her desk and went down.

Walsh was turning the cutter in the courtyard at the rear of the house and drove into the covered entrance as she opened the door. With a merry jingle of bells they were off. She was relieved to find that it was not incumbent upon her to talk. Walsh's interest was wholly in the mare, Estabrook stock, he informed her, whose swift, even pace he watched with delight. When, after traversing one of the boulevards, they swept into the park, many

other horsemen, making the most of the fine sleighing, looked twice at Walsh, who, for the first time within man's knowledge, was driving with a woman beside him. These horsemen did not know Mrs. Craighill; and even the few acquaintances they passed seemed not to recognize her. Walsh bent toward her now and then, without taking his eyes from the mare, and shouted short sentences which she did not always hear, but he seemed to be speaking of the horses rather than of the persons who drove them. When other sleighs passed, the bells crashed discordantly in her ears for a moment; then the rhythmic, tuneless jangle from the long-striding mare floated back upon them like an echo.

The park's undulations, agleam in the snow, the rush of the sleighs, the liveliness and cheer of the gay pageant, were a lure to the eye and a stimulus to the spirit. Their runners slipped over the close-packed snow as though the splendid mechanism of the horse might — so near they approached flight — at any moment bear them skyward.

Once Walsh asked if she were tired, but she shook her head and they flew on again. The freedom from responsibility as they sped on was in itself grateful; she was even able to forget herself at times, to be quite detached from her own thoughts.

When they reached the house, she asked him, quite perfunctorily, if he would not stop and warm himself. Much to her surprise he said he would. She summoned a servant but Walsh went himself

to blanket and house the mare. When he returned she was waiting for him in the library.

"I'm afraid to offer a man tea, but you can have anything you like, Mr. Walsh."

"Nothing, thank you, Mrs. Craighill," he replied, rubbing his hands briskly at the fire. She rose to the need of making talk and complimented him upon the horse's speed and endurance.

"There's good blood in her; and they say blood tells. She could keep up that lick all afternoon. She enjoyed it as much as we did."

The excellence of the mare having been agreed upon, she felt herself faltering upon the edge of another abyss of silence. But with only an instant's hesitation, in which he bent the gaze of his odd little eyes upon her sharply, he said:

"I have no wish, Mrs. Craighill, to meddle in your private affairs, but it is possible that I may be in a position to serve you."

She clasped her hands tightly on her knees; her heart beat fast.

"I am sure you mean to be kind," she said, unresponsively. His little eyes, as she met them timorously, regarded her with something akin to pity. The lines of his mask-like face seemed softened as by some stirring of grace within. At his next words the blood poured into her heart as though to burst it.

"Please believe me, Mrs. Craighill, that I speak to you with the greatest respect, and with the best intentions. You are in distress. You have had

a message to-day that annoyed you very much. It is not important just how I came to know it; the important thing is to save you from any trouble."

"I don't understand — I don't know what you mean," she faltered.

"Your mother is threatening you; she has had an unpleasant encounter with your husband, and proposes now to come here and make a scene. Please do not be troubled, madam. If it were not in my power to help you, you may be sure I should spare you the shock of hearing this from me."

"How do you know — what can you do?" came from her in whispers. Her face was white; her tightly clasped hands were eloquent of great inner stress.

"Please do not be troubled. I want your mind to be at rest. Your mother may come to this town, but you will not know it; you need not see her. If she comes she will go again very quickly. She will not" — and he glanced about the room — "she will not honour this house with her presence."

He rose clumsily, and turned to leave. His manner, his voice, had reassured her. She called to him softly as he moved toward the door, and he paused and faced her. She walked slowly toward him, scarcely knowing what she did, and put out her hand. Her lips quivered; tears shone in her eyes.

"I know you are a good woman," he said simply, and left her.

CHAPTER XXIV

JEAN ANSWERS A QUESTION

WAYNE had not appeared for dinner, nor had he shown himself at all during the evening. In the morning, however, when Mrs. Craighill and Jean came down he was waiting for them in the library.

"Your father is coming in at nine o'clock, and I shall meet him with the car. You and Miss Morley had better go in to breakfast now; I will have a cup of coffee with you."

Jean was to remain until Mrs. Craighill returned with her husband; this had already been stipulated. Mrs. Craighill had made sure of the girl; their evening together had afforded ample opportunity for the strengthening of ties of amity.

She had tested Jean in her own way and found her singularly guileless. In the quiet of Mrs. Craighill's sitting room she had thrown open doors that revealed the narrow vistas of a happy girlhood; and a certain forlornness due to Jean's identification, in Mrs. Craighill's mind, with wet shoes and shabby, bedraggled skirts, yielded to the charm of the girl's simplicity and candour. It was a revelation to Adelaide Craighill that anyone to whom fortune had flung so few scraps could bring so brave a spirit

to the patching together of an existence. She was herself testing the reticulated threads which events had, within a week, woven into an inexplicable pattern.

She wore her hat to the breakfast table and watched coldly the pains Wayne took to interest the girl beside him. It was to Jean's credit, however, that she seemed properly embarrassed by Wayne's interest. She turned often to Mrs. Craighill and laughed sparingly at Wayne's chaff. Wayne was conscious enough of Mrs. Craighill's displeasure. A man who has played the rôle of love's adventurer and is at home in the part, does not expect to be a hero to two women at the same table.

Wayne saw Mrs. Craighill off in the motor. She did not ask him to accompany her or offer to carry him downtown. He returned to the table and concluded his breakfast. Jean rose at once when he had finished and went into the library where she sought refuge in a magazine; he took this as notice that his presence was not necessary, but after walking back and forth between the fire and the windows several times he sat down near her.

"There's something I should like to say to you."

"Well?" and she looked up without closing the magazine.

"I never knew until last night that you were Mr. Gregory's granddaughter."

He had spoken the least bit tragically and she smiled.

"Yes, he is my grandfather. I understand per-

fectly that I shouldn't be here, in your father's house, with my grandfather feeling as he does toward Colonel Craighill; and I'm sorry about it."

"I'm sorry, too — sorry about that unpleasant business matter. I have offered to settle your grandfather's claim. I should like you to know that I acknowledge the justice of it."

"But it's not the point for you to acknowledge it. It's only partly a money matter; there's more to it than that — at least, that's grandfather's way of looking at it. Mrs. Craighill asked me to stay until she came up from the station and I suppose I shall have to see your father this morning."

"Yes; I imagined she had asked you. She did it out of compliment to me!"

The colour stole into her face. She was not so dull but that she saw why Mrs. Craighill had kept her at the house. Jean took up her magazine and began reading.

"Please pardon me! I should not have said that."

She nodded slightly, without looking up. Her flushed cheeks told him plainly enough that she had grasped the whole situation at Rosedale and he was angry at himself for having referred to it.

"There is nothing in the world so important to me as your good opinion," he said, standing before her.

She closed the magazine upon her hand and looked up at him.

"This isn't quite fair of you, is it? I am in your house, and I can't very well run away. Please let us not talk of you and me."

There was no sympathy in her tone; she had spoken with quiet decision with the obvious intention of being rid of him.

"When I met you at the concert and walked to my sister's that evening I thought we were unstanding each other. Has anything that happened since changed the situation as we left it that day?"

"I wish you wouldn't! Please do not! It is very unfair and unkind. You know perfectly well that I cannot discuss such a matter with you; and what difference does it make one way or another?"

"I have no claim on your mercy. I cannot explain anything. I want the right to earn your good opinion; that is what I am asking."

"But why should you be asking? What difference does it make whether my opinion of you is good or bad? It is absurd the way we meet. Every meeting has been a little more unfortunate than the last — if for no other reason than that it has been another one! It is quite possible that I have lost your sister's friendly interest by that walk home from the concert. You must have seen that she didn't like it; and she was perfectly right not to like it. Nothing could have been more ill-advised and foolish than our going to her house together."

"Oh, if it's only Fanny! Fanny understands everything perfectly."

"That isn't very comforting, is it?" she asked with the least tinge of irony. She seemed more mature than he had thought her before, and she was purposely making conversation difficult. In a few

minutes his father and Mrs. Craighill would return and he must make the most of his time. His tone was lower as he began again, on a new tack, and she listened with reluctant attention.

"When I met you I was well started to the bad and I had every intention of keeping on. I was going to do a particular thing and it was vile — it was the worst. Why is it that you are standing in the way of it? Oh, I know you don't understand — if you did you wouldn't let me speak to you; but it's because you *don't* understand — it's because you couldn't understand, that it's so strange that you are blocking me. And not only that, but here you are in this house — this house that was my mother's, and you bring her back to me as you sit there — just where she used to sit. The sight of you makes all these later years of my life hideous to me: I can't do the thing I meant to — I see how foul it was; and I'm saying this to you now because I'm afraid of losing you — I'm afraid of your going away where you can't help me any more."

She had been obliged to read much into his strange appeal; it was as though he turned the leaves of a book swiftly, disclosing only half-pages, with type blurred and indecipherable. She looked at him wonderingly; there was a cry in his last words that touched her. It had been easy the day before to simulate feeling in his assault upon Mrs. Craighill's emotions at Rosedale but he had no wish to deceive this girl. Her eyes forbade it; and it was not so long ago that the sharp lash of her scorn had struck

him in the face: "*I don't care for your acquaintance, Mr. Wayne Craighill.*" She was saying now:

"I am glad if I have ever helped you, though I don't in the least understand how that could be. It is not for me to help anyone. No one who isn't strong can help another; we must be sure of ourselves first, and I am weak and I have made sad mistakes; I have done harm and caused heartache. And more than that, we belong to different worlds, you and I. I have tried to say this to you before, but we must understand it now. Our meetings have certainly been strange, but as I told you, I'm not superstitious. Very likely we shall never meet again, and you will go on your way just as though you never had seen me, and I will go about my business — and so ——"

"But if you knew I was going to the bad, and you could save me and I asked you to help, would you feel the same way about it? Maybe the answer is that I'm not worth saving!"

She smiled at this, but his appeal touched her. He was nearly ten years her senior, and belonged, as she had said, to an entirely different world, and he wanted her help and begged for it. She felt his charm and realized the danger that lay in it, and she wished to be kind, but here was a case where sympathy must be offered guardedly. This interview was altogether too serious for comfort and she rose, facing him with an entire change of manner. It seemed that she was the older now, the one grown wise through long familiarity with the world.

"MEN WHO WORK WITH THEIR HANDS — THESE THINGS!"

"I'm a busy person, Mr. Craighill; I'm working just as hard as I can and I hope to do something pretty good one of these days, in spite of the gloomy view I take occasionally of my prospects. Now, why don't you go in for something? Work, work, work! It's the only way to be happy. You haven't won the right to the leisure you're throwing away. It's cheating life to waste opportunities as you do. I saved just half a dollar a week for two years to get a chance to study drawing; I scrubbed and washed dishes in a hotel and ran a machine in a garment factory. And you may be sure that if I have to do it I'll go back to the sewing-machine next summer and begin all over again without the slightest grudge against the world. I'm not going to be a beggar; I want to earn my right to a share in beautiful things.

"Why, Mr. Craighill," she continued with increasing vehemence, "all the men I have ever known have been labouring men — men who work with their hands — these things!" In her passionate earnestness she held out her hands as though they were part of her case for labour. "My father was an anthracite miner, and he died at work. I've seen sad things in my life. I had a little brother who was crushed to death in a breaker. He was oiler boy, and he was so eager to get time to play at noon with the other boys that he crawled in to do his work before the machinery stopped and he was ground to pieces — fourteen years old, Mr. Craighill! I can't get over that — that he was a child and he died trying to win time away from

labour to play! I've seen them bring bodies of dead men out of mines all my life — my own father was killed by a fall of slate — but I'd rather sweep the streets, if I were you, or dig ditches, or drive mules down in the dark than just be — well, nothing in particular but somebody's son with money to spend — and not the least bit of sense about spending it!"

Wayne Craighill had been scolded, and nagged, and prayed over without effect, but this speech was like a challenge; there was a cry of trumpets in it. And her reference to the dead men of the pit, and the mordant scorn of her last phrases set his blood tingling. He was aware now that it was a sweet and precious thing to be near her: no other voice had power to thrill like hers; no other eyes had ever searched his soul with so deep and earnest a questioning.

"If I will labour for you — if I will work with these hands for you" — he held them out in unconscious imitation of her own manner a moment before, looking down at them curiously — "will you take my life, what I can make of it, and go on to the end with me — you and I together?"

She shook her head, though with a smile on her lips.

"No! That is an impossible thing. And this idea of my helping you — I haven't the least bit of patience with that — not the least. You were born free but you have wasted your freedom. If once you were to labour with your hands — to know the

toil of the men down below — you would see life differently, and all beautiful things would mean more to you. You are big and strong and you can be a man if you want to be. But I'm going to do a foolish thing — the most foolish thing I could do, I suppose — I'm going to be friends with you — just as long as you will let it be that; and I'm saying this — I wonder if you know why?"

"You are kind, that is all I need to know."

"I'm not in the least kind — don't misunderstand me. But," she smiled brightly, confidently, "I trust you; I believe in you; and I like you. If that suits you I'm ready to begin."

She put out her hand with a frank gesture and her smile won him to instant acquiescence, though there were stipulations he wished to make as to this new relationship. He caught a glimpse of the motor bringing his father and Mrs. Craighill from the station as it flashed past the windows to the carriage entrance. The desire to possess, to protect, to defend this woman set his heart singing. She did not fear him, an evil, abhorred castaway, an ugly wreck on the shoals of time; she had spoken to him rather as a man might have done, but his response was to the woman heart in her. His hand trembled in her clasp, and the wholesomeness, the sweetness, the earnestness of her own nature kindled the hope of life in his heart. He felt a new ease, as of lifted burdens, and a light was round about him; and well for this exalted moment that he could not see ahead into the circling dark.

"Good-bye, Jean!" He bent down and held her hand an instant to his cheek — the hand that had known labour!

"Good-bye, Wayne Craighill," she replied, soberly.

A moment later he left the house by the front door, unnoticed by his father and Mrs. Craighill, who at the same moment appeared in the side hall.

CHAPTER XXV

COLONEL CRAIGHILL IS ANNOYED

MRS. CRAIGHILL had seen her husband manifest anger on the night of Wayne's departure for Philadelphia, but she had not until this morning found him crabbed and petulant. A night in a sleeping-car is not conducive to serenity, but a wife has a right to expect her lord to bring a bright countenance home from the wars. Colonel Craighill greeted Jean with his habitual courtesy, but scarcely heeded his wife's explanation of the young woman's presence in the house. He excused himself, going to his room to retouch his sleeping-car toilet, and Jean went directly to the Institute. Mrs. Craighill bade her come often to see her; but the invitation lacked warmth and as Jean passed out of the grounds through the snow-walled path she wondered much about the Craighill household. But it was not of Mrs. Craighill or the handsome, courteous Colonel Craighill that she thought most, but of Wayne.

She walked through the crisp morning with her head high; for she was a woman, and it was sweet to know that she had, by his own confession, an influence over a man; that he had asked her help and that she, denying this, had agreed upon a middle ground on which it might be possible to meet and

know him. He was less inexplicable to her now. Knowledge of his unpleasant reputation, gathered from newspapers and from chance remarks of ignorant gossips, filled her no longer with repugnance. She tried to recall, over and over again as she tramped toward the Institute, just what she had said to him about labour, and about her belief in it as a means of grace for him; but oftener still she remembered how he had held her hand against his face, not kissing it, for that would have been too much, but holding it against his cheek — her hand that had known labour! And thinking of this she smiled so that passers-by turned to look at the tall, dark girl, with her lifted head and face illumined by happiness.

At the Craighill house happiness was not so legibly written on the two faces at the breakfast table. Colonel Craighill was clearly troubled, and the urbanity with which he asked as to his wife's health and the state of household affairs did not conceal the vexed undercurrent of his thoughts.

"What has Wayne been doing?" he inquired with a directness that for a moment disconcerted her.

"Oh, he has been in and out about as usual. I have not seen much of him. It was lonely in the house so I asked Miss Morley to stay with me. She's an Art Institute student that I met at Fanny's. Fanny has been called South, you know, by the illness of Mr. Blair's mother."

"Ah! I'm very sorry to hear that. So Fanny's not at home."

He finished his breakfast in silence and then, after a moment's deliberation, began:

"I'm obliged, my dear Adelaide, to speak of a very unpleasant matter. Your mother persisted in calling on me at the Brodericks', very greatly to my annoyance. I was amazed that she should be in Boston; I thought she had gone abroad."

She was silent, wishing him to go on; she had wondered just how he would approach her on this subject.

"I was very greatly embarrassed, I need hardly tell you, to have her looking me up in that way. Very likely she has written you of her call. You may be sure that I was as courteous as possible, but her manner was not just what I should have liked to have my wife's mother manifest toward me. I have rarely in my life been so pained by any occurrence."

Some reply was necessary and Mrs. Craighill was prepared.

"I don't quite understand the spirit that prompts you to speak to me of my mother in this way. She is mistress of her own affairs and she does not go abroad or do anything else merely to please me. It is necessary for me to remember that she is my mother, even though you are anxious to forget it."

"But, my dear Adelaide, when the visit to the Brodericks' was so important from every standpoint, don't you see in what a position it placed me to have Mrs. Allen demanding at the door to

see me? It really spoiled what would otherwise have been a very delightful visit."

"It was unfortunate, as you say," she replied coldly, though her heart beat fast with the joy of her opportunity. "It was most unfortunate and I deeply regret it. Nothing could have been sadder than for you to have been ashamed to take me to visit the great Brodericks and then to have my mother tumbling in on you, creating, no doubt, an embarrassing encounter with the servant at the sacred door."

"Adelaide! I don't understand you — you can't be aware of what you are saying!"

"I am quite aware of what you have said. You had every expectation of taking me to Boston with you. And I had every expectation of going. But when the Brodericks wrote and asked you to their house, wholly ignoring me, you made it very easy for me to stay at home. The whole thing was as plain as that coffee pot."

"You are most unjust! I didn't believe you capable of harbouring such thoughts of me."

"I had to harbour them when they sailed so boldly into port. It was all perfectly obvious."

"You are not only unfair to me, but to the Brodericks as well. They had just returned after a long absence and the cards announcing our marriage had failed to reach them."

"And you took advantage of their ignorance to accept an invitation for yourself without daring to suggest that there was a wife to consider. There

wasn't a wife to consider — she didn't have to be considered! — that's all there is to that."

"I explained all that to you — that night when the letter came — that I didn't know them well enough to suggest that they include another guest; and that, moreover, I was invited rather impersonally, and I thought that it was to give me a chance to meet Senator Tarleton and have an opportunity, impossible elsewhere, to interest him in our reform work."

"Well, did you meet the Senator?" she asked, her arms folded on the table and her head bent forward a trifle. She was amused to find his anger against her mother for her invasion of the Brodericks' diverted to herself, and she willingly accepted the situation. Her husband was not used to answering questions propounded in this impertinent fashion, and his resentment increased.

"Yes; certainly the Senator was there!" he answered with asperity.

"And — Mrs. Tarleton?" she asked with an inflection that did not fail of its intention.

"Well — yes; she was there, very greatly to my astonishment. But that has nothing to do with this matter of my going without you; the two cases are not comparable."

"You mean, Roger, that the lady and I are not comparable?"

"I mean nothing of the kind! Addie, you pain me more than you can know. I had never expected you would speak to me in the tone you are using."

"Well, I have spoken to you in this tone because I have a right to maintain my own dignity under this attack you make upon me. I married you with some idea that I was to be your wife, but it seems that that understanding was on my part only. As to my mother, just what is it you wish me to do with her?"

He was very angry now and his voice rose from its usual calm, assured tone.

"I want you to keep your mother away from here! She is an impossible person! She threatens to make you a visit, merely for the purpose of annoying me — to abuse me for not having forced her upon the Brodericks."

"But you didn't force her upon them; you managed very cleverly to get rid of her without letting them know she was your mother-in-law. You had asked her to make a visit here when you thought she was going abroad for an indefinite stay, but now that she is on the way to your house you ask me most inhospitably to shut the door in her face — my own mother!"

"I ask you, after her conduct at the Brodericks', to tell her she can not come here, not at this time!"

"Yes; I see; it's to punish her for not being good."

"She asked me for a loan of money; I had hoped to spare you that, but you force me to tell you in my own defense."

"Do you know," she replied with the most delicate shading of insolence in tone and manner, "that

I had never understood before the geographical difference between Boston and Pittsburg? It seems that I can be your wife here, but that I am not quite equal to that lofty station among the élite of Boston. It's a little hard on Pittsburg, isn't it?"

"You are outrageous — and unreasonable! I had never understood that you were so devoted to your mother — I had thought you superior to her; and now you take a stand with her as against me. It grieves me to be obliged to say to my own wife that I am disappointed in her. Bring your mother here if you like; humiliate me in my house if you want to! I shall have nothing more to say in the matter."

He rose and struck the table sharply, glowering down at her.

"If that is quite all," she said sweetly, "I will tell you something. What you have said to me about my mother is not what I expected from you. I know her far better than you do; and now that you have discussed the matter so frankly on your side — how absurd that we should have taken sides! — I will be frank, too, and tell you that one of the reasons for which I married you was to escape from her. I thought, from your showing of respect and affection for me, that I should find in Colonel Craighill a champion and a friend if not *quite* the ideal lover. And now at the first sign of trouble, at the first opportunity you had to prove my confidence and faith, you not only threw me aside to avoid showing me to your critical acquaintances,

but you would wound me by flinging at me my mother — my mother who has never been anything but hateful to me — who would have made traffic of me and sunk me low for her own ends."

The last words came from her slowly; tears were in her eyes as she rose to her full height and faced him.

"And now," she ended, "I will say to you that my mother will not trouble you; that she will not" — and Walsh's words came back to her and she felt secure and comforted as she remembered him — "she will not now, or at any other time, honour this house with her presence."

CHAPTER XXVI

COLONEL CRAIGHILL SCORES A POINT

COLONEL CRAIGHILL reached his office in anything but an amiable state of mind. As he disappeared into his own room and closed the door the chief book-keeper exchanged a wink with the prettiest stenographer, and the messenger turned up the collar of his coat to signify falling temperature.

At his own desk Colonel Craighill scanned the summarized reports that were so sufficient to his executive sense, but this inspection gave him no pleasure; and his personal mail disclosed matters that did not please him. And against all precedents the cashier entered unbidden, bearing memoranda that deepened the annoyance that Colonel Craighill had carried to the office. And, crowning irritation, the president of the Hercules National Bank, in which he was a director, and the cashier of the Greater City Trust Company called him by telephone and begged his early attendance at their offices.

In his perturbation Colonel Craighill narrowly escaped referring his own cashier to Walsh; and the fact that Walsh would, just at this moment, have been a substantial reed to lean upon did not ease Colonel Craighill's burdens. "Ask Walsh,"

had been, in old times, before the Wayne-Craighill Mercantile Company passed into Walsh's hands, the commonest phrase of the office; and Walsh's successor could not, in the nature of things, know the inner history of the many Craighill interests as Tom Walsh had. Several times within the past month, "Ask Wayne" had been heard in the outer offices; and this was not more remarkable than that, when the appeal had been made, it was found that Wayne knew!

Wayne was busy at his desk when his father entered and closed the door behind him. He had been checking an estimate of his father's liabilities and he knew that Roger Craighill owed a large sum of money — a very large sum indeed — and in December the fog of the October scare still lay upon the land.

"Wayne, I want to see you for a few minutes," and Wayne started guiltily at the sound of his father's voice and thrust his memorandum out of sight in a drawer.

"You may not be aware," began Colonel Craighill, "that the general financial conditions are serious."

Wayne's resentment rose on the instant, as always at these implications that he was unacquainted with the affairs of the business world. A sharp retort was on his lips; the morning papers had contained the latest of his father's reassuring statements as to the brightening outlook, but he answered:

"Well, it's been on for some time, hasn't it? I thought everybody began to get to cover last spring."

"Things tightened up in the fall but I had expected the trouble to be over by this time, but the pinch has grown sharper than I expected. The conditions are very unusual but they ought to adjust themselves. My anticipations have all been correct, though our financial mechanism is still slightly out of adjustment in vital quarters. My own affairs are, of course, subject to general laws like every one else's."

Luck is a goddess in all our mythologies, but we credit our own wisdom when affairs prosper. Mistakes, when we assume blame for them at all, are at the most mere sinistral inadvertences: heavier losses we charge to the blindfold goddess and her dice-box.

Wayne knew that his father had not come into his room to philosophize, and he groped for light as to the real object of the interview. Colonel Craighill took a lead pencil from Wayne's desk and played with it nervously. Wayne was struck by the fact that his father did not look well to-day; his fine colour was lacking and there were dark lines under his eyes.

"You'd never know from the newspapers that there's anything wrong. I thought your interview in Boston that our papers copied this morning was quite conclusive."

Colonel Craighill glanced at his son quickly. Wayne's tone was perfectly respectful and he met his father's eyes steadily. Colonel Craighill shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"We must do what we can to tranquillize the public mind. I was asked to say something in the press occasionally by a number of our strongest men. They seemed to think I was the best person to do it"; and his eyes brightened for a moment at the consciousness that he had been chosen as sponsor for the city's business interests.

"I have found it necessary to increase my collateral in several places. I don't quite like being required to do it; the demand comes just at the wrong time for some of my investments. You have some stock, haven't you, in the Mexican Plantations Company?"

Wayne's heart gave a big throb and he smiled.

"Oh, no; I haven't a share — not one."

"But I thought ——"

"Oh, I did have several hundred shares, but I cleaned them out last fall. A friend of mine, a 'Tech' man, who's a mining engineer in Mexico, was in town one day, and I asked him about that scheme and he didn't give me very flattering reports of it. So I sold out the first chance I got."

"Do you mind telling me who bought it?"

Wayne's heart was beating rapidly. The moment for which he had longed had arrived. He wished to play with it, to delay the complete realization of the joy now within reach.

"Well, I had reason to think afterward that you had bought it yourself. There was one block of a hundred shares that I sold through those Boston brokers who handle that sort of thing, and I noticed

afterward that you were credited with that number of additional shares on the office books."

"You might have spoken to me before selling when it was at my suggestion you went in. It strikes me that your selling in that way was a reflection on my judgment in recommending it. Your conduct was not filial."

"You can hardly construe it that way. You recommended it in good faith; and I saw no reason for disturbing your confidence in the company simply because I had a hint that the greasers down there hadn't made the vanilla beans grow."

"Walsh was perfectly satisfied with it; he went in when I did. In fact, he asked me to let him go in."

"Yes; I remember," said Wayne. "Tom went *in* all right."

Colonel Craighill moved restlessly in his chair; his anger was mounting; it showed itself in his deepening pallor and in the trembling of his hands and lips. Ordinarily he would not have asked Wayne whether Walsh had sold his shares in the Plantations, but the question now escaped him, and after he had asked it his wrath increased as Wayne smiled a little in replying.

"I'm not very well acquainted with Walsh's affairs, but it's my impression that Tom let go, too. The shares took a boost right after we bought, you may remember, and Tom promptly sold out. I'm sorry if it doesn't look as well as it did," remarked Wayne, who knew that the engineering company which had

been installing an irrigation plant for the Plantations had suspended operations owing to the financial stringency.

"Walsh is under no obligations to me; he was merely a useful clerk in the office; but I don't understand this withholding of confidence in my own son. I don't like it. I have been aware for some time that you were not dealing frankly with me, that your life was apart from mine; but this sort of trickery is going too far."

"I don't see where the trickery comes in. A lot of your friends were in the thing. They've been going down to Mexico in private cars to admire the prospects. I sold out because I wanted to do something else with my money. I didn't know I had to apologize for selling my shares. It would only have annoyed you if I had told you I was going out. And you speak of my lack of frankness in dealing with you. I suppose you don't realize that I have been a little less than the office boy here practically since I left school. You've never seen fit to take me into your confidence; I've been worse than an outsider, and I'll tell you now that I've resented it. You don't have to tell me that I've been a disgrace to your name; I know that. I'm a rotten bad lot; there's no getting away from it; you can't say half as mean things of me as I can say of myself. You've assumed that I didn't know that the papers you sent into me from day to day were not of the slightest importance — chaff for the waste-paper basket; but I've known it. I've known that it

was all a good joke, my being here at all. Everybody knows I've made a beast of myself getting drunk, but I suppose you thought it naturally followed that I'm a fool, too."

He realized at once that the shot had been badly fired, and that he had thrown away ammunition which at a fitter season might have satisfied his thirst for vengeance; but Colonel Craighill had grown calm under his son's outburst. He had a reputation for tactful negotiation. There was something that he wished to get from his son, and while the temptation to inveigh against Wayne's unfilial conduct in disposing of the Mexican securities without notice was strong, Colonel Craighill waited a moment to mark a change of subject and when he spoke his tone was amiable.

"I'm sorry you have so much feeling about the matter. I'm a little surprised, that's all, that you should have left the Mexican venture without telling me; but it's not of the slightest consequence. But while we're speaking of such things — your holdings in companies that I'm connected with — I just heard that you've acquired the forty shares of Sand Creek stock that were owned by the Moore estate. Is that correct?"

"Yes; I have them," and Wayne's anger burned hot again as he remembered the spirit in which he had acquired the shares and the chiding he had received from his father for overdrawing his account to buy them.

"I'm going to ask you, as a special favour, to

let me buy them of you, Wayne," Colonel Craighill went on calmly. He laughed lightly to minimize the importance of the favour he asked. He knew perfectly how to manage such things, for whatever he lacked in other particulars Colonel Craighill was skilled in the arts of business diplomacy. He created an atmosphere of amity, and Wayne was angry because he felt the spell of it. Colonel Craighill continued as though he were in the daily habit of exchanging courtesies with his son, to emphasize more and more the fact that this was a favour he asked. Wayne knew that he had blundered. If his father asked for the Sand Creek shares in this spirit he could only save his own dignity by relinquishing them.

"You see the Hercules National people helped me finance the Sand Creek deal, and they got their friends interested. Moore was one of our friends and it was assumed, of course, that we'd get those shares from his estate. I'll go a bit further with you, Wayne. The Hercules is carrying my paper for a large amount and they were very decent in October when the pinch came; and until I can make a turn or two in other directions I'm not in a position to displease them. I should take it as a great favour if you would let me have those shares — at your own price."

Colonel Craighill smiled into his son's eyes.

"Certainly, father, you shall have them at the price I paid. I'll get them from the vault immediately."

A few minutes later he closed his desk with a slam and prepared to leave. He had weakly yielded to his father's easy, conciliatory speech and the thought of his supineness sharpened his hatred of his father to its keenest edge; but the blade in his hand was an incompetent, worthless thing. He was as weak as Hamlet before the gates of opportunity. He was out of patience with himself; he had boasted a moment before that he was no fool, but without turning a hand his father had tamed him to do his bidding. He felt depression seizing him; the fierce thirst cried in his blood, and there was only one cure for that.

The telephone tinkled and he snatched the receiver impatiently. Paddock spoke to him from the parish house at Ironstead. Joe Denny, the chauffeur, was there, very ill, and had asked for Wayne. The current of his thought immediately changed; he had utterly forgotten Joe, and he at once took the trolley for Ironstead.

CHAPTER XXVII

"I'M GOING BACK TO JOE"

"HE'S in a bad way with pneumonia," Paddock explained as he met Wayne at the door. "He crept in here this morning before daylight with a high fever and I put him to bed and got a nurse for him. He's been out of his head this afternoon and he has asked for you repeatedly. It is kind of you to come. Miss Morley came to help with the cooking class and she's with him now, to relieve the nurse for an hour. Will you come up?"

Joe lay on Paddock's own bed. The room was darkened and out of the shadows Jean rose to meet them.

"He's asleep now, but he has been asking for you. He said he had something he wanted to say to you."

"I will wait," said Wayne.

He talked with Paddock a few minutes in the hall; there was little question of Joe's recovery, Paddock said, but both lungs were affected and his temperature soared high. There were many sick in the town, and many unemployed required help. Paddock's smile had never been so sad but he wore the air of a man of affairs and the joy of his work was in his dark, homely face.

"Make yourself at home. If you can stay a

little while it would please the boy, if he should know you."

The sick man's harsh breathing alone disturbed the quiet of the room. Wayne sat near the door, and it was some time before the figure on the bed and Jean's outline beyond, her hand resting lightly on the sick man's wrist, became clear to him. The ticking of a watch on the table at Jean's side reached Wayne fitfully; and once when she bent down to see the time her head was caught in the lamp's glow, and the purity of her profile and her sweet, womanly solicitude touched him. He thought of her rather than of the stricken man who lay between them.

Not since those dark days long ago when his mother lay ill in her familiar chamber had he looked upon sickness. He recalled those days now — the shielded lamp, the gloom, the silence, the waiting. And then he recurred to his interview with Joe in the garage, That had been a day of events, surely! And much had happened since. He experienced a pang of guilt at his neglect of Joe, who had made the long and toilsome journey to Ironstead to find refuge with Paddock. Life, clearly, was a mixed business, an ill-rehearsed play, where no one knew his lines and where the exits and entrances were all haphazard.

The sick man stirred and tossed restlessly. Jean was at once alert, bending over him anxiously. Abruptly he began to speak, the words harsh and indistinct, breaking from him in little moans; but

the sense of what he said as Wayne caught it was this:

"He can't have you, Jean. He's my friend, but he can't take you away from me. . . . He saw your picture in my room, but he doesn't know about us. . . . Don't you be scared; I'm not goin' to hurt you. I won't follow you any more. . . . I want to go back to the hills where we came from, Jean. I want to see Golden Bridge and the place where we played when we were kids. I want to see the men with black faces comin' out of the ground. . . . He's the best friend I ever had but he can't have you. . . . You go on and draw pictures of the breaker boys and the dirty Dago babies. I'll keep away from you. . . . Don't you call strikes on me, Mr. Umpire! I tell you my left arm's all right. I'm pitchin' the game of my life; over the plate, every one of 'em. All right, give him his base: you're rotten, you're rotten, I say."

His voice died hoarsely in his throat and the room seemed quieter than ever as he ceased. The ticking of the watch rose and fell; Jean was a shadow, silent and vague as shadows are. Wayne had risen when Joe began to speak, looking down upon Jean as she knelt clasping the sick man's hands. The nurse came softly in and heard Jean's report of the hour.

"I will come again in the morning — or I will stay now," said Jean.

"No; you can do nothing to-night. But to-mor-

row at the same hour I should be glad to have you come again."

"I shall be here," said Jean.

"He will be better; he will get well," the nurse whispered, anticipating her question. "He is very strong and I've seen many worse cases recover."

"He didn't know me," said Wayne, when he was alone with Jean in the hall.

"No — but he will be glad when they tell him afterward," she replied, and he saw that she had been crying.

"If you are going into town you will let me go with you — please?"

"Yes; I'm going at once," she answered indifferently.

Below they found Paddock engaged in placing cots in the assembly room.

"Boarding house burned down and I'm going to take in a few of the boys. You might lend a hand on these chairs, Craighill — pile 'em in the corner — good! And you, Miss Morley, if you'll show me what to do with these blankets, we'll soon have a grand dormitory."

Cots and bedding had been brought out from town and these were opened and distributed; Wayne, glad to be doing something, did the heaviest lifting. Jean, moving about silently, unfolded and placed the blankets. Some of the men to be sheltered were already coming in, receiving Paddock's cordial greeting as they appeared at the door.

"That will do beautifully," beamed Paddock,

surveying the lines of cots with satisfaction. "Thank you very much. Joe will be all right. He's as hard as nails and a mere congestion of the lungs can't hurt him particularly. Good of you to come, Craighill. Sorry I can't give you both something to eat, but we had a fine line of hungry fellows to-day and they cleaned me out."

The minister stepped into the crisp white night for his last words with them. He was not a deep searcher of souls, but this man and woman puzzled and interested him greatly. He noted their fine height, their vigorous, free walk; and knowing much of both their lives he was moved to pity for them.

On the long journey into the city they spoke little. Jean was preoccupied and Wayne was glad to be silent. What had Joe and Jean been to each other? Whatever the relationship it had meant much to the young man, as proved by his incoherent murmurings. Jean and Wayne had the car to themselves much of the time, but she did not speak except to answer his occasional questions.

"It is late; you will miss your dinner. If you will go to the house I can telephone Mrs. Craighill to have supper ready for you."

"Oh, no; they will give me something at the boarding house. My grandfather is there and he will be troubled if I don't come."

"Mr. Gregory is here again?"

"He comes and goes. I think I ought to tell you that he is preparing to press his claim against Colonel Craighill in that Sand Creek matter. I

have urged him not to, but he is old and ill and I sometimes think his mind is unsettled. I ought to take him away. As long as I'm here he has an excuse for coming. I ought to give up my work, and take him back home — to our own home at Denbeigh."

"It's an unfortunate matter — the whole business. My father's interest in the Sand Creek Company is very small. He has nothing to do with the management of the company."

"That's where the trouble comes in. It's not the business side of it any more; it's the feeling grandfather has that it was a personal matter between him and your father. He insists on looking at it that way."

"I think there's a real claim. I will see what I can do with the officers of the company. It will be no trouble whatever," he said, roused at the prospect of serving her.

"Please do not! I don't think that would satisfy grandfather at all. He wants the offer of a settlement to come from Colonel Craighill. I appreciate your kind feeling about it, but please do nothing; it would not help."

A Russian woman with a shawl wrapped round her head entered the car dragging a child of three by the hand. The little boy, planted on a seat directly opposite Jean, fixed his great, wondering eyes upon her.

"The poor little dear," she murmured; "I've been wanting just that type, but now it doesn't seem quite fair to try to catch him."

She drew from the pocket of her long coat a small memorandum book and a lead-pencil stub and began sketching. The mother stared and frowned, not quite understanding, but Jean was all intent on the white, wistful face opposite, and Wayne, watching her, marked her earnestness, her complete absorption. She had snatched off her gloves in her haste and he picked them up and unconsciously smoothed them as he watched her hand fly over the paper. The lurching car did not trouble her; she finished one sketch and began another, tearing the first sheet from the pad and thrusting it into her pocket. Finally, she held this second attempt up and inspected it, turning it so that Wayne might see. It was his first glimpse of any of her work and he was amazed at her cleverness; her few bold strokes had brought the sad little face to paper; the folded baby hands were there, with pathos in their tiny clasp. Jean thrust it away in her coat and crossed the aisle to speak to the mother, who supplemented her scant English with smiles of appreciation as the stranger praised her child. A little later as the mother left the car Wayne dropped a silver dollar into the baby's hand.

"You must always pay a model for sitting. What are you going to do with the sketch?"

"Oh, I have use for it. Maybe you will see it again some day."

They transferred to another line to complete the journey to Jean's boarding house. Wayne had expected to leave her at the door. He was surprised when she asked him in.

"I would like to see you a moment, Mr. Craighill, if you can wait."

She turned up the gas in a dingy parlour whose shabby upholstery retained the vague conglomerate odours of boiled vegetables. The place was hot and he threw open his coat but she did not ask him to sit down. She closed the door and stood beside it, as though to emphasize the brevity of the interview.

"I must tell you something — something you have a right to know. I ought to have told you at your house the other morning, but I could not do it then. It pleased me — I may as well tell you that; it can make no difference now — I was pleased that you wanted my friendship, that you asked me to help you. It flattered me, I suppose, but I knew at once that it was all wrong. I had known from the first time you spoke to me and even after we met again at the parish house, that we must not know each other. It was all wrong, very wrong. And to-day you heard what Joe said. He was delirious and didn't even know who we were; but what he said about me had a meaning. We were born in the same town — up there at Denbeigh. His father and mine both worked in the anthracite mines; we went to school together; I went to the high school, but Joe had to stop and go to work. When I was eighteen we ran off and were married by a minister in Scranton. I think he really loved me and I was fond of him, but I had been better educated than Joe. He was a miner, but had quit that to play baseball. He was a good player, they

said, and could make more money travelling about than by working in the mines. But it was a mistake, our marrying, and I saw at once that it wouldn't do. After three months I wrote to him while he was away that I would not live with him — that it was all ended. My grandfather got a divorce for me — I know now that was wrong, too. Joe did nothing to prevent it; but after I came to Pittsburg last fall I began meeting him, and he would follow me sometimes. He had taken it hard, poor Joe! And I was anxious to go on with my studies — that was the real trouble; and Joe didn't know or care about those things. He used to laugh at my pictures and say they were very pretty; but he was never unkind to me. He was a good boy — a clean, upright boy; and I brushed him out of my life as you would sweep dust out of a room. It was not right — it was not right — it was not right!"

She stood rigidly against the wall, her plain, long coat thrown open and disclosing her simplest and cheapest of gowns. When she had spoken to him in his father's library of the nobility of labour it had been with an exultance that thrilled him; she had told him this pitiful little story in hurried whispers, dry-eyed but with uplifted head.

"I am glad you told me; but you are taking it hard now because Joe is so ill. You have no right to accuse yourself; you and Joe are wholly different; your marriage was a boy-and-girl affair and utterly unfit. The law has freed you, as it should free people who make such mistakes. You have the

ambition and ability to do something in the world. Joe is a good boy but he could never tiptoe up to you. You did only the right thing," Wayne ran on glibly. "Your life is your own to do with as you like: you would have no right to throw it away or waste it."

The unreality of a situation in which he was weighing right and wrong for another was not lost on him; and he was fully conscious that his words made no impression on her. She was intent with her own thoughts and her eyes rested upon him unseeingly. She had hinted before at reasons why they should not know each other, but he had assumed that these were chiefly his own reputation and the divergent paths to which they were born. But he knew now that she was a divorced woman; she had been the wife of a coal miner, a ball player, his own servant. These facts swept in review before him and he met them with full gaze, giving full value to every point. She was young, and they exercised on each other an attraction with which it might be possible to trifle; and yet no evil thought came into his heart. She had opened the slender book of her life to its marred page; her life, like his, had failed at the start; but into this knowledge he read a new kinship between them.

He attempted to reason her out of her position and failed.

"It was wrong; it was a great sin," she persisted.

Suddenly he stood at her side and seized her hands.

"Jean! Jean! You are a free woman. You mean all there is in the world to me of purity and goodness and sweetness. I need you! I need you! And I believe you need me. Let us begin our lives again, Jean. I will be so good to you; I will love you so much — so much."

But she flung open the door behind her.

"You must go," she said, with averted head; "you must go!"

"But you are wrong; oh, you are very wrong, Jean! You care; I know you care. I want you to belong to me," he whispered.

"I have my own duty; I see it clearly now. I have been wicked and selfish. I thought only of myself when I left Joe; and if he should die now it would be my fault, my sin."

Her distress was great and the tears coursed down her cheeks. Then she threw up her head in the way he loved. Her lips trembled but there was no mistaking her words.

"I'm going back to Joe; I'm going back to him."

CHAPTER XXVIII

CLOSED DOORS

WAYNE stood uncertainly on the boarding-house steps, glancing up and down the bleak, deserted street. The night was cold and a keen wind whipped his unbuttoned ulster round him. The woman watching him through the blind, so near that he was within arm's reach of her, felt the tragedy of this hour. Her sense of responsibility for one man's life had prompted her confession in the ugly little parlour; but there stood another, whose need of her was not less great. She had sent Wayne Craighill away and she must always think of him as he stood there, outside the threshold of her life as it was to be, blown upon by winds of destiny. A bit of paper, whirling in the blast, was not more a thing of chance than he.

A succession of trolleys passed as Wayne lingered, staring out upon the street. He was hardly conscious of the conflict that raged within, the turbulent spirit, the appetite already thwarted once to-day, uncoiling like a serpent and demanding to be satisfied. His heart was in rebellion against whatever gods he knew. No one in all the city was so lone as he; but there was always the great resource. He glanced toward the heart of the city; a car was approaching

and he took a step; it was approaching rapidly and he started to run. It stopped with a harsh grinding of the brakes, and he put his foot on the step, then swung round, leaving an angry conductor swearing on the platform, and walked rapidly toward home. Jean, waiting at the window, saw and read with relief the meaning of his changed decision.

The spirit of the storm was not fiercer than that in his own heart as he strode away and as his blood warmed with the exercise he began to enjoy his buffetting in the gale. He had started up the long avenue toward the East End, widening at every step the distance between himself and the haunts he had known in drink. The internal struggle was less strenuous, now that his body fought the gale; and the remembrance of Jean nestled bird-like in his heart. She was a woman, unlike any that had ever been before in the world, and she had opened her soul to him for a fleeting glimpse and closed the door forever.

He strode on until midnight, with the bare boughs of the trees bending over him under the lash of the blast; and he found himself at last quite near home, and suddenly tired and weak, for he had eaten nothing since his slight luncheon. When he had gained the house and let himself in he flung himself down in a chair in the hall, and sat there, too weary to go further. The weakness of hunger was a new sensation and he felt so strange that he wondered if he were ill, and nothing that had happened seemed real or possible.

He became aware of a light step on the stair but in the dim light from the single hall lamp he saw no one. A moment later the switch clicked and Mrs. Craighill stood gazing at him as he sat in one of the high-backed hall chairs, his ulster falling loosely round him, his hat on the floor at his side. There was no mistaking the meaning of her accusing glance.

"Wayne!" she cried, "what are you doing here?"

He rose and clung wavering to the chair, confirming her impression that he was drunk.

"I'm all right, Addie. I haven't been drinking — not a drop. Don't make a fuss. I'll go up to bed in a minute. I'm a little knocked out, that's all."

He shook her off impatiently as she tried to help him out of his coat.

"Please run along, Addie. I'm tired to death, and I guess I'm hungry. I'll get some crackers."

Nothing would serve now but that she must find something for him to eat; and he followed her into the dining room where she lighted the alcohol lamp and prepared to make tea. He protested, as she came and went with things for his luncheon, that far less would do. She moved about softly in her slippered feet, her dressing gown fluttering about her, while he sat with his elbows on the table and his head in his hands, unheedful of her questions. She brought a chair and sat down near him to tend the kettle and waited what seemed an insufferable time for him to speak. Finally she said:

"Your father came in only a little while before

I heard you. There was a meeting of the directors of the Hercules National to-night. He seemed very much troubled when he came home."

Wayne lifted his head. "Yes; I suppose he is."

"Have the business troubles affected him? He says there is no panic."

Wayne roused himself at this and grinned.

"You might be sure father would take a sanguine view of the situation. That's his way. It doesn't make any difference what you call it — a panic or a shortage of currency or anything else — the country's been scared to death and the fright isn't over yet."

He drank his tea and ate hungrily the sandwiches she had made. The news that his father had been at the bank until midnight interested him; he knew that the Hercules carried his father's paper for a very large amount, and that it was maturing. Seeing that the mention of the financial stringency had interested Wayne, Mrs. Craighill jumped to the conclusion that the Craighill fortunes were in jeopardy and that Wayne's condition was due to the anxious state of affairs downtown. She had believed her husband very rich and the thought that he might experience reverses was not pleasing. She had passed an unhappy day after her interview with her husband that morning touching the unfortunate Boston excursion. She had spent the evening alone and, though Wayne did not know it, she had telephoned to the Allequippa Club and to the Penn and asked for him. She had much to tell him and

as he seemed more like himself, now that the hot tea had warmed his chilled body, she was quite ready to prolong this interview for her own relief and pleasure. She was charming *en neglige* and her hair in long braids added its note of intimacy.

"It's nice to see you. If you won't tell — really and truly — I'll confess something."

"Well?" he scowled.

"Dear me, you'll have to do a lot better than that, Waynie, dear."

"Don't call me Waynie; it makes me sick."

"Oh," she pouted and threw herself back in her chair.

"What is it you wanted to tell me?" he demanded.

"Nothing."

"Then don't make so much fuss about it. You'd better go to bed."

"I'm comfortable right now, but I've been lonesome and unhappy all day. I hoped you would come a long time ago. I kept a fine fire going for you — really just for you — in the library, and now you're as cross and uninteresting as you can be. I didn't suppose you Craighills were all cross."

"So father was cross was he?" asked Wayne, scowling into his cigarette case.

"Oh, terribly cross. I tried to be polite to him and he went into his room and slammed the door. He was very cross this morning when he came home from Boston. He saw my mother up there."

Wayne's manner changed.

"That's perfectly bully! If you have any more news like that, Addie, you may go on and tell me. Let's move into the library."

He stirred the fire into life and threw on fresh wood. He was refreshed by his luncheon and it was the curse of his temperament that he never ignored the nearest pleasure. Addie was a pretty trifle of a woman and it was not unpleasant to find her in a receptive mood. She crouched beside him, so close that he could have placed his hand on her head.

"This is very cozy, isn't it? It must be hideously cold outside. Your father was going to take me to Bermuda for Easter, but I suppose we may all be in the poor-house by that time."

"Stranger things have happened. But they wouldn't take you at the alms-house. You are young and capable. I don't just see you sitting on the bench with the old ladies, knitting socks. It would not become you, Addie. If the worst comes you would go out like a brave little woman and support your husband."

She flashed a frightened look at him; she had no idea that her husband's difficulties were serious, though she assumed he might be temporarily embarrassed, as men often were, without finding it necessary to change their manner of life. She remembered that the roof over her head belonged to Wayne and she sought to reassure herself as to the permanence of the arrangement by which Colonel Craighill had the use of it.

"You wouldn't let them turn me out-of-doors, would you Wayne?"

"Well, if father went broke it would hardly be up to me to carry on the house here; it's an expensive establishment to run. I might have to sell it myself."

"Yes; I suppose your interests and your father's are identical. What hurts him would hurt you."

"Not at all! Our interests are anything but identical. We belong" — he said, with an irony that was for his own satisfaction — "we belong to different schools of finance. Father's a plunger without knowing it; I'm a Wayne and the Waynes were always true Scots and kept what they had and sat on it. Father likes to be director of things, and the things liked to have him. He's been used a good deal as bait — that's what it amounts to. He's just paid about two hundred thousand dollars for the privilege of sitting with a lot of solemn gentlemen up at Boston who organized a big corporation to raise bananas or grape fruit or something in the torrid deserts of Mexico. You know father well enough by this time to understand how that idea would appeal to him — irrigation to water the desert and make it blossom as the rose! I went in for a few thousand and so did Walsh; but we quit, and to-day when I told father I had sold out he was wounded. Tom Walsh is about the shrewdest old party there is around here. We sold out at the same time and both made money."

He laughed softly to himself and slapped his knee.

"If you knew your father had got into a bad

thing you ought to have told him — don't you think so?"

"Yes," he mocked her, still chuckling; "we ought to have told the Colonel he had bought a dead horse — and been gently kicked for our trouble. We know the Colonel, Tom and I. You notice that Tom bought out the mercantile house. Tom's wiser than a serpent; he knew it was the best thing father had. Tom likes me. Isn't it funny? He's always settled all claims for damages against me when I've ripped things loose — and done it economically and quietly — never said anything, but just asked later for my check and said "Um" when I thanked him. I caught the old rascal once giving an organ to a church somewhere — Vermont or New Hampshire; I guess it was Vermont, come to think of it. He was terribly bored when the bill strayed in to my desk. It was in memory of his father and mother and he growled fiercely because I got on to it."

"He's a strange man; I don't understand him," remarked Mrs. Craighill carelessly.

"By the way, how did you come out with your drive with Tom? Of course you told father you had been out riding with another man. I don't know just how he would have taken it; you see Tom was only a sort of clerk in father's office; father never knew him socially. I'll wager you didn't tell the Colonel."

"No; I didn't tell him. He was so angry about mother having spoiled his visit to the Brodericks'

and threatening to come here for a visit that I couldn't have told him if I had wanted to."

"Ah! I suppose you'll wire her not to come, like a good little girl."

"No; I'll do nothing of the kind; but she won't come."

Her tone caused him to look at her quickly; but she met his gaze quietly and asked:

"How did you get on with Miss Morley after I so considerately left you alone this morning? This has really been a very busy day, hasn't it?"

Wayne's heart sank at the mention of Jean. It was in this room that very morning that heaven had seemed so near. Mrs. Craighill had followed her inquiry with a glance to see why he ignored her question. He had turned forward the table by which Jean had stood when he took her hand and held it to his face. He did not answer her question but stared dully into the fire where the events of the day mocked him in kinetoscopic flashes. Mrs. Craighill raised herself to her knees and brought her face close to his.

"Are you in love with her, Wayne?"

"What if I am?" he snapped, stirring uneasily and drawing slightly away from her.

"I'd be sorry if you were in love with anyone, I think; but you musn't let her hurt you. I shouldn't like that. She is too handsome for a poor girl; I suppose I was too," she concluded with a sigh.

She found and caressed his hand. The faint, elusive perfume of her silken robe, the light touch

of her hand, the fine precision of her profile, the pretty red lips and heavy-lidded, smiling eyes combined to quicken his heartbeats. She was here, quite within his reach, a wounded bird, with bruised wings, asking shelter. The revenge he had carried in his heart since the night he read her letter announcing her engagement to marry his father was attainable — he knew it by all the manifold testimonies of his senses, the response of his nature to hers. She was, as Tom Walsh had said, fragile, like glass; and he was a veritable weathercock, the wind's plaything. His hand closed over hers, she drew nearer and her head lay on his breast, and he stroked her fair, bright hair.

"It's good to be happy. I wish I belonged to you. If things only went right in this world I should, and we should have dear times together."

Her bare arm stole about his neck; the touch of it kindled his blood like flame.

"You are tired of it?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes," she answered softly.

"You've been cheated; you paid a big price for the happiness you didn't get."

"He doesn't care the least bit. I don't interest him. You might think he would talk to me when he was in trouble, but he keeps as far away as he can. But — I'm really not so bad — am I, Wayne? I'm not ugly, or stupid, or so very foolish?"

He pressed her hand for answer.

"Don't you think I'm as nice as Jean? She's big and strong and handsome — and she's inter-

esting — I can see how she appeals to you; but there's so much she doesn't know. Don't you believe I know more than she does?"

His hand relaxed; she was aware that he drew away from her. He rose, almost flinging her away.

"For God's sake, Addie, don't talk to me of her; don't speak of her."

"Oh!" It was the exclamation of a rebuked child. "Of course I didn't understand," she pouted. "You seemed lonely and I was trying to be good to you. Of course, then, she is wiser than I am. If I'd known how it stood with you I shouldn't have spoken of her at all."

"She knows what you don't know; she knows me."

"Then she must be very wise!"

"She knows ten thousand things you never dreamed of; she has watched them bring dead men out of the pit; she has heard grimy children crying for their dead fathers. She knows the real things; but life to you is only a candy box with pretty pictures on the cover."

"This may be very interesting," she remarked coldly, "but I'm afraid you're going to bore me. I don't think I care to hear about dead men and the pit and children crying. Good night."

He was safe for the moment. Her reference to Jean had steadied him, but he was not sure of himself. He felt that Jean was there by the table where he had pressed her hand to his face; the viol-like chords of her voice were in his ears; he saw the

light of her countenance and felt the benediction of her spirit.

Mrs. Craighill had never understood him less than in that instant when, half turning to leave, she saw the far-away look of his eyes, the straightening of his figure and the indifferent glance that showed his acquiescence in her departure.

It was at this moment that the lights in the hall, which they had turned off when they sought the library, flashed on again. Mrs. Craighill sprang to the switch inside the library door and darkened the room. The hall lights fell only faintly across the library threshold, but as she peered out through the portières Mrs. Craighill saw her husband slowly descending, clad in his dressing gown, some papers in his hand. Her heart tore at her breast as she waited. When he reached the hall she was quite sure that he would come into the library and she put her hand over her mouth to stifle her frightened breathing. But he turned toward the little coat room and she heard him at the telephone. She was faint from fear, but Wayne caught her wrist and held her. Colonel Craighill was dictating a message to the telegraph office; cries for help these messages were, Wayne knew, to friends in New York and Philadelphia, and they added testimony to the worst Wayne knew of his father's plight.

"Come," Wayne whispered to the shrinking woman — "come."

He drew her across the room and through a little-

used door that communicated with the rear of the house, to a circular stairway that led to the upper floors, and waited until he heard the door above open and shut softly. Then he went back to the library and saw his father pass into the lighted area of the hall and mount the stair slowly.

The lights were snapped out from above and the house was still. Wayne sighed deeply and sought in the dark the chair in which Jean had sat that morning. When the light of the late winter dawn crept in grayly he was still there, his head bowed in his arms on the table.

CHAPTER XXIX

"YOU LOVE ANOTHER MAN, JEAN"

IT WAS two weeks later that Jean, paying her daily visit to the parish house, found Joe sitting up in bed. The nurse was to leave the next day, and Joe was impatient to be about again. The room had taken on a brighter air from Joe's convalescence. A light had been so arranged by his bed that he could read and he had gorged himself with sporting supplements which Paddock had collected for him. Life had begun to interest Joe again. The philosophers of the diamond were already speculating as to the disposition of players, great and small; strategy boards were in session wherever "fiends" congregated, planning the campaigns of the approaching season. Pittsburg's chances of winning the pennant were, even in December, a burning issue among men of apparent sanity.

Jean drew off her coat and sat down near him. She had brought three carnations and gave them into his hand to hold while she found a glass for them.

"They're nice flowers. Thank you, Jean."

She moved about the tidy room, doing useless and unnecessary things to satisfy her inner sense of duty. He did not know that her heart was beating fast or that her hands trembled. She was

almost as white as he when she sat down beside him. There were many questions that he wished to ask her, but he was not sure to what new ground of relationship his recovery had brought them.

"I've given everybody a lot of trouble. Kind o' tough turnin' Father Jim out of his own bed. He's the real stuff, all right. I guess I'll be some time squarin' this. He says" — he hesitated a moment and the smile died away from his good-humoured mouth — "he — Father Jim says my boss was out here."

"Yes," Jean replied. "Mr. Craighill came out here when you were sick and sat right there beside you. He was very kind and has had things sent out — many nice things to eat. The nurse has been giving them to you; she didn't know where they came from, probably."

"How long ago did he come?" asked Joe, the apprehension showing in his face, and she understood.

"That was when you were first sick. There was a chance that you might never get well and you were delirious and kept talking about him and calling for him. So Father Paddock telephoned him to come."

"Where is he now?" Joe asked presently; and Jean met his eyes and answered:

"I don't know. I think he's gone away somewhere."

Joe shook his head weakly on the pillow.

"I guess I ought to be up and lookin' out for him.

I could always handle him when he was bad. You better get Walsh on the job."

"Mr. Walsh and Mr. Wingfield both understand. You needn't trouble about Mr. Craighill."

"I guess Whiskers — that's Wingfield — is all right," remarked Joe reflectively. "Wingfield and Walsh are good friends of the boss and I guess they'll look out for him. But he's pretty fierce to handle when he gets goin'."

"You may be mistaken," said Jean. "I don't believe it's that."

"Well, he's due all right. If Whiskers and Walsh are both lookin' for him he must be pretty bad. I say, Jean."

"Yes, Joe."

"You know what I did out there at Rosedale — followin' you that way. I guess I was sick then, and my head wasn't right. It seemed kind o' funny to be takin' you a ride in *his* machine with *him*. And the widder, too. It was kind o' funny, him and the widder bein' out there. I ain't onto the widder but she's a good looker all right. But the Colonel — say, he's frosted fruit. He ain't got much use for me. I can see it in his eye. But Sister Fanny — that's Mrs. Blair — I'm strong for her. She's the human featherduster, all right, but she means good. You know I never lived round rich folks till Mr. Wayne set me up as chauffeur and moved me into the garage. Guess I might 'a' been rich myself if I hadn't fell off the bus at Harrisburg and cracked my right pipe. But say,

Jean, I never tell the boss, but I can pitch with my left arm just as good as the right. I got a new southpaw ball that would worry the boys some if I went into the game again. But I told Father Jim I would cut it out and hang on to chaufferin', which ain't what you might think with the speed limit what it is, if he thought Mr. Wayne needed me. You see I'm onto his curves and know how to handle him."

"Yes, Joe; I'm sure you have repaid him for his kindnesses to you."

It was not easy to hear Wayne Craighill spoken of in this way. If it had not been that she realized the depth of Joe's fidelity and devotion to Wayne she could not have stood it. For Joe saw in Wayne's lapses only the pardonable escapades of a young man of fortune whose spectacular performances were free from the ignominy that attaches to drunken outbreaks of the poor and obscure. Joe felt that he was not saying the right thing; Jean's inattention warned him to stop. Her hands were clasped in her lap, and her lips had been shut tight during his wandering recital. When she and Wayne had sat here in this room with Joe between them she had resolved upon a course that would abruptly change the channel of her life — that might blight and wreck it irrecoverably. She had already made her purpose clear to Wayne and that had been hard; and she had Joe to tell now and that was more difficult, for while Wayne could understand what it meant to her, she knew that Joe was incapable of

understanding. She had brought herself by slow, difficult steps to the high altar of duty and was ready now to make confession and yield up her sacrifice.

"Joe, there's something I must tell you. I've been waiting to tell you until you were well enough to hear."

"I'm all right, Jean; go ahead," he said, turning so that he might see her better.

"You know, Joe, that when I left you it was because I felt that we had made a mistake, and that we could never be happy together. I was honest about it; I felt that it would be a great sin for us to go on living together when I found I didn't care. I was young and so were you and we had never thought about life seriously. You were the nicest, manliest boy in our town, and you thought I was the nicest girl, so we ran off and got married. It wasn't necessary to run away, but it seemed romantic and it was childish, like all the rest of it."

"We were kids, all right," murmured Joe.

"But when it was done and we were married I saw how serious it was and I saw the mistake, too. Just to live on with you, and to work for you while you were working for me and to go on that way till we died — I saw right away, Joe, that wouldn't do. And there was the fear of children coming — you know what the children of the poor in mining towns are like, and the thought of that was a terror to me, Joe. I don't think you ever understood how I felt about that. And more than

anything else I realized that I wanted to go on with my work — that it meant more to me than you did, Joe. I'm speaking of these things because it's only square to myself that I should go over them for a minute. You were as kind as could be; you cared — cared as I did not and could not."

"Oh, I know that, Jean — I know it. But let's not talk about it — it's no use talking about it."

"We must talk of it — or I must, and I want to do it now. You never did one thing that was not right. You were a good, clean, honest boy and you would never have done anything to hurt me. It was I who hurt you. You were generous and kind and I was selfish and hard. I saw only my own happiness and the chance of doing something in the world for myself. And I put you away from me as though you had done me some great wrong — or as though you had been a bit of ribbon I didn't want any more. A woman has no right to treat a man that way when he has never harmed her or done any dishonourable thing — when he is kind and gentle as you were. It seems a long time ago that it all happened, and I supposed you didn't care any more. But after I came here and began seeing you again I saw that you had not forgotten and that it hurt you deeply. I suppose I never felt quite right about it. It felt like a fraud on people who thought I had never been married, but I told the friends I made here — Mrs. Blair and Mr. Paddock. I suppose that in my heart I knew all the time that I had done wrong. I had set myself up as better

than you were, and I had broken my oath to you; the law could never make that right, but I never understood it until that evening I came here first and saw you sick, and other people taking care of you."

The old ache had come into his heart. It had never hurt him so much as now and in his weakness the tears stole down his cheeks, but he shook his head wearily on the pillow.

"It's all over; I'm sorry I bothered you and that I ran after you that day in the snow-storm, but I guess I wasn't quite right in my head then. It was this sickness coming on. But it's all done, and you don't need to trouble about it, Jean."

"But, Joe," and she bent nearer and took his hand, his big battered hand, with his fingers twisted and bent by mine labour and the punishment of the ball field; caressed it and went on in the same low tone with which she had begun. "It isn't over, Joe. I've talked to Mr. Paddock about that. He says the court's making me free and giving me my name again doesn't really count. You know how good and kind and gentle he is, but he was very firm about that. He said I had sacrificed my duty to my ambition — that was the way he put it — and now, Joe ——"

And this was the hardest thing for her to say; it was bending her neck again to the yoke from which she had been free; and there was a pain in her heart that was not for herself but for him, for he had been the sufferer; it was he that had cared.

But she knew, as she believed he could not, how impossible it would be for them to find the lost path in which they had begun to walk together. He would take what she offered without knowing at how great a cost she gave it, and her mind leaped on at a bound across the long years before them to the end of their lives. She saw her hopes for her work crumble into dust, and the world of beauty which the dawning consciousness of her powers had illumined before her, the joy of success, the stimulus of applause, the acquaintance of people who would appreciate her skill — all these things she would sweep away by a word and forget that they had ever been her dreams or that life had ever held anything better for her than being Joe's wife, and living on with him, and eating the bread won for her by the hand that lay there in hers. Suddenly, before she could finish and tell him she would go back to him and renew the broken tie, she felt his clasp tighten and she took it that he understood and that this was his acceptance of what she meant to offer. She did not look into his eyes at once and she hoped he would not speak, for anything he could say would only cause her pain.

"Jean."

"Yes," she said bravely.

"It's no good, Jean. I can't let you do that; we quit, and if that was wrong we can't fix it now. You don't need to feel sorry for me. I'll be out o' here and all right pretty soon. And I ain't goin' to drag you down. You talk about doin' me a

wrong, but that's no reason why I should do you a bigger one. We meant well when we started out, but it would never have been any good. Don't you feel sorry about it — it's all right, Jean. It's like the good girl you are to offer to take me back, but it's all done and over. I want you to be happy and go on with your work; but I'm not goin' to be a dead weight on you. We ain't for each other, Jean."

He dropped her hand, as though the matter were concluded; but what he had said was not a release, it only sent her back to the beginning of her task.

"You love me, don't you, Joe — just as you always did?"

He turned his head away and did not answer.

"And if you do, I owe it to you to go back to you. I had no right to throw your love away after I had taken it and pledged you mine. The only way I can make it right — the only thing there is to do — is for me to come back."

He was silent a long time and when he turned toward her he asked slowly:

"Do you love me — do you care for me, Jean, even a little bit, as you did when we were married?"

In the long silence that followed she did not see the tears that brightened his eyes; but he drew himself up slowly, drawing the pillow under his arm for support.

"You don't care any more, Jean. You didn't care when you left me and got the divorce; and you don't care now. But that's like all the rest;

it's past and over. Maybe sometime I won't care any more either. You love another man, Jean, and that's all right, too. He's my friend and he's been kinder to me than anybody else ever was. He needs you — I guess you know that. And it's all right, Jean, it's all right."

The mention of Wayne had filled her heart with wild tumult, and she made no reply. Joe knew the truth: that she did not care for him, and that if she had ever cared greatly she would not have left him. She could not lie to him; for duty cloaked in deceit would be only false and ignoble.

The nurse came in, ending the interview. On her way out Jean asked for Paddock, but he was in the city. So she went back to her boarding house with a troubled heart.

CHAPTER XXX

THE HOUSE OF PEACE

WINGFIELD, Walsh and Paddock sat in melancholy council in Walsh's glass box of an office. The Blotter had been at it again. Wingfield had suggested bringing Paddock into the matter, though Walsh had demurred that it was hardly decent to use a preacher as a policeman. It was Walsh's idea that Wayne — who had used his motor car as a battering ram against the austere walls of the county jail — should be dispatched to a sanatorium for treatment. Paddock shook his head.

"Please — not yet!" begged the minister.

"But you've got to come to it sooner or later. It's a disease in that boy and we may as well handle it on that basis."

Wingfield, who had consulted several medical friends as to the treatment of dipsomania, confirmed and supported Walsh. Paddock smiled sadly.

"I happen to know that he had been tried a good deal of late. He has had a staggering blow or two. He had been straight for several months — made a new record. And he ran against a very serious proposition that was too much for him. "

"What's that?" demanded Walsh bluntly.

"He told me last fall that he had decided to go to hell — in just those words — he's disappointed; he's found out that it's not so easy as he thought."

"Um," grunted Walsh, feeling in his pocket for a cigar to chew.

"I mean," said Paddock, "that he's too much of a man for the devil to handle. There's real manhood in Wayne Craighill; he would be lonesome in hell. And besides, the road downward isn't so easy as it looks. Please understand me, gentlemen, I'm not talking religion; I'm merely stating the plain truth from my own observation and experience. I had the same idea once myself. I'm not proud of it and mention it only to illuminate my point. I used to get most beastly and hideously drunk, so I don't take a purely academic view of such cases, but where there's any manhood left in a fellow he can't be as wicked as he wants to be. I've had my eye on Wayne all winter. Good influences have touched him. But with the good came unhappiness and he saw no way out but the red door that pushes in on greased hinges. He's like a child. When he can't get what he wants he vents his rage by getting drunk and trying to tear the town to pieces. He will profit by a brief rustication in a safe place where no one will bother him and where he won't feel the shame of being hustled into a drunkard's cure somewhere. We can always fall back on the doctors. Let's send him to a place I know over here in Virginia where they're practising a new idea in just such cases ——"

"Hypnotism, psychotherapy — what is it?" asked Wingfield.

"Bless you, no! It's the idea I've already suggested, which was developed by a friend of mine in the ministry, that no man can be as base as he wants to be — an attack on sin on the score of its futility. Wayne had begun to catch glimpses of that a little while ago. He thought he saw a straight road right down to the bottom, but he was surprised to find that it wasn't such clear sailing after all. Something happened very unexpectedly to make him pause; then he couldn't get what he wanted so he decided it was all off again and he's been drunk and disorderly. Now if you'll let me have him for a couple of weeks, I'll see if we can't give him a new idea or two, and when you've interrupted the downward course several times — a score if necessary — he'll begin to understand that we don't really fashion our own lives at all. As I said before, we can't be as wicked as we'd like to be — assuming, of course, that we are not utterly depraved and abandoned and that there's still something left to nail to. All this isn't my idea — Paul Stoddard suggested it."

"Stoddard — the Protestant monk," remarked Wingfield doubtfully.

"Not in the mediæval sense, however," replied Paddock. "He's an original, up-to-date monk. He takes cases that everybody else has given up — and he has no failures."

"Um. If you think praying over Wayne Craighill will cure him of drunkenness you can do it," growled

Walsh, who had with difficulty rescued Wayne from the clutches of the police only the night before. "I'd rather try some other kind of medicine."

"You needn't be afraid of Stoddard. He won't pray over Wayne or scold him or preach to him."

"You spoke of some hard blow Wayne had recently. Was it a woman?" asked Wingfield.

"Yes," the clergyman answered.

"What was the matter with her?" growled Walsh resentfully.

"I suppose it was my fault," Paddock answered. "She is a fine woman — but she wasn't quite free, as we look at it in the Church."

"And of course the Church couldn't sacrifice itself," Walsh grumbled.

"It wasn't as easy as that, Mr. Walsh. There were three people to consider, leaving the Church out entirely."

"Well, I'm for trying the monastery," said Wingfield. "It can do no harm, and he may resume operations while we sit here talking about it."

"Mr. Paddock," began Walsh, as his visitors rose, "do I understand you to say that a man can't go to the bad if he works hard enough at it?"

Walsh frowned so fiercely that Paddock laughed.

"Oh, not so broad as that! But there are good influences at work in the world — you see evidences of them all around — and they are increasing all the time. And they make things harder for the ambitious sinner; he's engaged in a sort of obstacle race."

"Um," was Walsh's only comment. He threw

up the window of his cage that looked upon the wintry street and watched Wingfield and the clergyman picking their way cautiously through a battery of noisy trucks. The porters and clerks saw his bald pate hanging ominously above them in the crisp air, but the window closed with a bang without the usual malediction. Walsh growled to himself for a while and then, seeking an outlet for his emotions, summoned a frightened little stenographer whom he had threatened with dismissal that morning and raised her wages two dollars a week.

Wayne Craighill followed Paddock from the train at a station high in the Virginia hills. The poison had been steamed out of him, but his mind was still dull from its latest punishment. He had been glad in the first hours of his reaction to have Paddock's sympathy and he had agreed to leave town with the minister without quite comprehending where they were going.

A buckboard was waiting and they were soon off, threading their way through the snowy hills. Wayne stared ahead indifferently, and when they reached a lonely stone house, perched high on a rough crag, he accepted this as their destination unquestioningly. And so he came to the house of the Brothers of Bethlehem.

Stoddard himself flung the door open — a tall man of thirty-five, alert, quick of movement and ready of speech. It was, it seemed, the most natural thing in the world that Wayne Craighill should be

there — no questions asked, no discussion of the reasons for his coming, no time fixed for his departure, no laying down of rules.

"We want you to make yourself perfectly at home, Mr. Craighill. The walks are fairly well cleared in the neighbourhood and the air is the finest on earth. We call this the House of Peace — no newspapers, mail once a week, and telegrams are almost unknown. We have the place for ourselves and our friends to rest in. You will find a schedule of the day's events in your room but don't let the religious offices disturb you. They go on all the time and it is not in the least necessary for you to attend them. Please be free to do as you like. You and Paddock are St. John's boys — I'm one, too — five years ahead of you, though."

He led the way to a small bedroom on the second floor, whose windows framed at the moment the ruddy winter sunset. The room was severely simple, its woodwork white and scrupulously clean, the furniture limited to essentials.

"The best thing about the room is the view," observed Stoddard and in a moment he had gone, for it was the hour of vespers and the brothers were already assembling in the little chapel below.

Wayne turned gloomily from the window.

"Stung! Kidnapped and smuggled into a monastery! Well, Jimmy Paddock, you have your nerve! It's all right with me, but how about that big fellow — what is he, the abbot? — if he knew what an outlaw had got into his joint he'd probably drop me into the

valley down there. Are you going to leave me here alone with nothing to do but say my prayers?"

"Sorry I've got to go, but I'm off to-night."

"So you've brought me here to lose me! How long am I in for?"

"You can leave any time you want to and you can do as you please while you're here, just as Stoddard told you."

"Thank you," mocked Wayne. "I'm going to fool you by staying."

The novelty of his situation, the strangeness of the life of a religious house, and the quiet good fellowship of the men who gathered at the common table of the refectory, clad in their brown robes, interested Wayne in spite of himself. The brothers were all young graduates of American colleges, vigorous, manly fellows, who did not discuss religion to-night, but social and political questions just then before the world. Stoddard asked Paddock for an account of his own work at Ironstead and the minister described the general social conditions of Pittsburg, throwing out questions to bring Wayne into the talk.

Wayne's presence was accepted as a matter of course; no particular importance attached to him as a guest, and he had not for a long time felt so wholly at ease as among these young priests, whose aims were utterly different from any idea he had ever entertained of religious work. There were only ten of them and they had assembled for a period of rest and discussion with their leader before separating

to continue their work in various parts of the country immediately after Christmas. One of the brothers who particularly attracted Wayne had been a sailor. He had spent his summers sailing in coastwise ships to earn his way through college. Another had been a ranchman in Colorado and was to leave shortly for work in Montana. At the end of the meal as at the beginning they stood in their places and recited prayers, making the sign of the cross. All but Stoddard, the Superior, went about their affairs at once. He asked his guests into the library, a comfortable lounging room where they continued the talk of the table until a brother appeared to carry Paddock to the station.

Wayne rode down with them, returning to what seemed to be a deserted house; but as he stood uncertainly in the hall he heard from the little oratory the deep voice of Stoddard reciting compline. He went to the door and peered in upon the brothers at prayer. The room was quite dark and there were no lights for this service on the tiny altar. Stoddard's voice boomed through the little chapel; the kneeling priests in the rough choir stalls responded in the antiphonals with deep, hearty voices. There was nothing spectacular or theatrical in the scene; the setting was too bare for this; and these men, Wayne reflected, were seriously commending their souls to the mercy and protection of a God in whom he did not believe. He went out into the night and followed the rough road that climbed farther into the mountains, pausing now and then, where

breaks in the woodland offered clear, moonlit vistas, to gaze across the valley to the hills beyond.

In the depression following his latest plunge into the depths, while his head ached and his hands shook, a dark thought had crossed his mind and it came back upon him now. A slip on the edge of one of these iron crags and he would crash into oblivion, and that would be the end of his troubles. If Paddock had lodged him here with the idea that he might be won to a belief in religion he had made a stupid blunder. The religion of emotion might in certain circumstances have appealed to Wayne Craighill, but the religion of service as practised by Stoddard and Paddock struck him as vain and futile.

The road followed a sharp defile and the sheer depths below invited him. It would be quite decent of him to free the world of his wretched self, that had given him no joy and that had become a byword and a hissing wherever his name was known. He wondered why he had delayed so long. Life was a prison-house and the labour was hard; below, there in the snowy ravine, lay peace. He stopped abruptly by a clump of cedars, clutched them and bent over to scan the depths. He could see no bottom, and the place was so lone that they might not find him when it was over. He felt that he had never before been so wholly master of himself, and the thought steadied him; if he had ever been sane it was now, when he was about to take French leave of a dreary and unprofitable world. The moon looked down upon him coldly; the snow-clad hills were indifferent;

the wind lay still, waiting for this life to slip away like a pebble into the gorge. The place was fitting; he chose his spot and made ready for the leap.

Steps sounded behind him as of some one walking, but whoever came moved deliberately along the shoulder of the hill toward the top. There was no reason for delaying; ample time remained in which to step into the gorge and be done with it. Wayne clung stubbornly to the slippery edge; but the moments passed. The tall figure of Stoddard, the priest, drew nearer, his head bowed and his arms folded under a long cloak. His shovel hat gave a bizarre note to his costume. He gained the crown of the ridge and lifted his head.

"Ah, you came out to watch the moon to bed! That, Mr. Craighill, is my own privilege."

Wayne stood doggedly by the ravine edge. It was on his lips to berate the priest for appearing at this crucial moment, and Stoddard's calm manner angered him.

"This is the best view possible anywhere about here," the priest continued. "You have an eye for landscape, but the wind is rising; let us walk on into the wood and get away from it."

"Father Stoddard, you have done me an injury. If I had not heard your step when I did I should be lying at the bottom of the gap."

The reaction had been sudden and he was all unstrung. His voice was strange in his own ears.

"Oh! You had intended doing that? I really can't believe it."

"You might as well believe it; it is quite true," persisted Wayne, irritably.

"Those things do occur to all of us sometimes," replied the priest calmly. "But in your own case it is quite impossible. I advise you to dismiss the matter from your mind."

"I tell you I was going to do it; a second more and I should have been a dead man."

The priest readjusted his cloak, throwing an end over his shoulder.

"Well, why don't you go ahead?" he remarked carelessly. "I give you my word I shall never mention it. But see — you haven't the will to do it. You yielded yourself for a moment to the absurd hallucination that your life was a complete and finished thing, but it is not; I take it upon myself, my dear Craighill, to say that it is not. There are many rough edges; the design is incomplete. You will have to wait a little, my friend. The will of God has not had its divine way with you yet."

"The will of God!" cried Wayne, hardly knowing in his anger that he was following the priest away from the precipice; "do you think I believe any of that rot?"

"Then," the tall priest replied, speaking brusquely, as was his way, "we will say the way of the devil, if that pleases your humour better. The devil, then, hasn't made a very good job of you yet. He has his sense of artistic completeness, and he can hardly look upon you as one of his *chefs d'œuvre*. Even the devil requires time. It doesn't strike me off-hand,

from my observation of his patterns, that he's made much headway with you. He would undoubtedly accomplish more in time; but you are not ready for his collection yet. Let's continue our walk. We must have a good many ideas in common. In your day at St. John's did they afflict you with roast veal every Thursday? They did in my time and it was always a trial to me. I remember ——"

A light way, indeed, to treat the heroic impulse of a man ready, a moment before, to plunge into the dark; but Paul Stoddard was not without his wisdom.

He wrote a note to Paddock that night in which he said: "Craighill is a good fellow and there is hope for him. He is a man in search of his own soul and he will find it in time. Pray for him."

The days passed. At the end of a week Wayne expected to leave; but the freedom and peace were sweet. He was enjoying a luxury of unhappiness. Christmas came, but it brought him no joy, only unhappy memories. He kept clear of the oratory, where the recitation of offices was interminable. The priests were happy souls to be able to believe in such things! Brother Azarius, the sailor, asked him to walk to the village for the mail after the midday meal, which was amplified into a feast by gifts from the farmers of the valley. A novel Christmas this, for Wayne Craighill, dining with priests in a mountain monastery, but they were cheerful, wholesome fellows and he liked their talk, which was utterly

unaffected and interesting. He set out with Brother Azarius for the village in the valley soon after dinner. When the mail-bag was handed out at the general store Wayne felt a pang of homesickness — his first — at beholding this tie between the quiet hills and the throbbing world below. He had sent no message of any kind to Fanny, who had always included him in the Christmas celebrations at her house; she was still South when he left and unless Wingfield had told her, she did not know his whereabouts. He wrote a telegram in the railway station wishing her and her household a merry Christmas. "Don't trouble about me; I am perfectly well."

He began a message to his father, paused uncertainly when he had written the address, and tore it up, the old resentment on fire again. He left the station but paused in the highway and went back. "Best wishes for a happy Christmas," he wrote to Jean at her boarding-house address. He could not for the life of him add a word to this, though he wasted half a dozen blanks in futile trials, while Brother Azarius tramped up and down the station platform. Poor Wayne! Too bad life isn't all spelled out in the nursery picture books that we might know the worst at the beginning and be done with it! It was well that Brother Azarius had that capital story of his shipwreck off Martinique up his sleeve for emergencies like this or Wayne might have found the memory of Jean's hand on his cheek too much for him — that dear, brave hand that had known labour!

The brothers cut their own fuel and the next

morning he found an axe and plunged into the snowy wood. The priests had scattered widely and only two remained at the house. Stoddard had gone West to be absent a month, but Wayne was beginning to enjoy his security and isolation.

By noon he had blistered his hands, but he kept manfully at work. In a few days he had developed skill and viewed the increase in his daily product with satisfaction. His bodily health had never been so good. At times he was almost happy and went whistling about his work. This was what Jean had told him to do: find labour with his hands. And all these days Jean was never out of his thoughts, never out of his heart.

So the weeks passed and Wayne lingered at the House of Peace, taking long walks over the hills; talking with the brothers, whose circle changed frequently; felling trees in the snowy wood, and performing such other manual labour as offered. He saw the earliest vanguard of spring steal into the hills, resisted, flung back, but camping at last on the summits, smiling conquerors. He watched the swelling buds and bore proudly home the first furtive arbutus. His blood was purified, his spirit lightened in the lustral air. He read much, sending away for books and periodicals; he wrote letters to Jean and tore them up; he brooded, pondered, wondered, and walked the ridges with the stars.

One evening, near the end of April, Stoddard, who had just returned after a long absence, came into his room.

"I'm sorry, Craighill, but your time is up. You must go home to-morrow."

"But I'm not ready to leave yet! If you'll let me go on chopping wood and carrying water I'd like to stay. I'm a failure down below there — I don't want to go back; I can't go back."

"That is good; I'm glad you feel that way about it."

"I can't lie to you: I don't believe in God. You've done a good deal for me and I see things better; but I'm likely to stumble and fall again the day I leave here."

"That is quite likely, as you say," said the priest. "There may be some further struggles and difficulties; you old friend the devil isn't so easily shaken off; he has the pride of his craftsmanship, as I told you the night you came. There are some men who, if they asked to be allowed to remain here permanently to escape the dangers and temptations of the world, I should not refuse. I should feel that way in the case of weaklings, failures or cowards; but you are different, Craighill. You do not fall within these classifications. The House of Peace is not for you; you've got to go back into the world to wrestle with it, to get under the devil's heels perhaps, but to find your feet finally and in time to become a man, honoured, respected and loved by men. I am not a prophet, and have no knowledge of your future that I don't read in yourself; but I am not alone in my feeling about you. These members of the Brotherhood see and feel it and they are, you

may say, experts in cases like yours. Without trying, you have made them like you. We are all your friends. You don't believe in God — the God we preach — and I'm not going to discuss that with you. It is barely possible that you are incapable of belief; but those things are a good deal a matter of phrases and words. No two men of our brotherhood have exactly the same idea of the person of God. No two souls are just alike any more than the eyes of two persons respond to the same test. When I read I am obliged to use a pair of glasses which would probably blind you utterly and it would be absurd for me to force you to use them. And it is equally far from my intention to force my religious ideas upon you."

Wayne was silent for what seemed a long time, for he was half-ashamed of the question he wished to ask.

"How did it happen that you found me that first night when I was actually at the point of tumbling over the cliff out yonder?"

"My dear Craighill, I wish you wouldn't ask me hard questions like that," laughed the big priest. "You may call that chance, if you please. I did not follow you by intention, or know as a matter of fact that you had gone in that direction." Stoddard was silent for a moment; then he laughed happily. "You don't believe in my God, you tell me, but, my dear fellow, I believe in yours!"

Wayne's hand shook as he drew it across his face.

"Don't send me away from here," he pleaded huskily.

"This isn't the place for you, my brother, my friend. The world isn't wholly bad — not by any means — you must go back to it," said Stoddard kindly. "If you feel at any time that I can help you, send for me; the doors of this house are open to you day and night. We are often widely scattered — only one brother remains here always and you can come at any time without notice. But to-morrow you must go back and take your place in the ranks of the fighting men."

The priest rose. For a moment he rested his hands lightly on Wayne's shoulders.

"Good night. God bless you, Wayne Craighill."

Wayne returned immediately to Pittsburg and to his father's house. Mrs. Blair, to whom he reported promptly by telephone, greeted him in her usual excited fashion, but, having been charged by Wingfield, through her husband, not to force Wayne to discuss his banishment, she was obliged to forego the pleasure of acquainting herself with her brother's experience of the monastic life. His Christmas gifts from her house were still piled on his dressing-table where he found also the haberdashery his father always bestowed upon him; and there was a book inscribed "Addie to Wayne, Christmas, 1907." His father greeted him with that urbane tolerance with which Wayne had long been familiar. The prodigal's place at the table was waiting, and no painful questions were asked as to the cause of his absence. Mrs. Craighill showed her brightest face,

and no chance visitor would have known that the son of the house had last appeared in it on the eve of a prolonged spree. There was no exchange of confidences, no confessions, no exhortations behind closed doors. Colonel Craighill talked of social affairs and of the events of the new year, and Wayne added a word now and then when Addie's eyes beseeched his. He was sorry for Addie, who did not know or care what progress was making in disarmament or whether the African slave traffic had really been abolished.

The ways that had known Wayne knew him again. He returned to the office, where little had changed; he met Wingfield at the Club and learned all the gossip of the city. Walsh, in his glass cage, discussed the profits of the mercantile company, and brought Wayne to date as to the financial situation, over which he growled characteristically. He answered Wayne's questions as to Colonel Craighill's affairs guardedly, but from his manner Wayne assumed the worst. Walsh was reluctant to discuss these matters, but he proposed, in his usual blunt fashion, that Wayne join him in the management of the mercantile company.

"I've got too much to do down here. You can name your own salary, and create your own job. We can double the territory we work now and it would be a big help to me to have you. You've got your oats sowed now and when I curl up with apoplexy some day you will be ready to continue the business at the old stand."

Wayne, touched by the old fellow's generosity, asked a day or two to think it over.

From Paddock, who called on him at the Craighill offices, Wayne learned that Joe had recovered and had found employment with a sporting goods house; but he asked no questions and Jean's name was not spoken.

It was finally agreed that on the first of May Wayne should assume an active part in the management of the mercantile company; but Wayne's life was not so easily to be brought to tranquil waters, as we shall see.

CHAPTER XXXI

WAYNE SEES JEAN AGAIN

RICHARDSON, the distinguished editor of that admirable magazine, the *Hemisphere*, was a guest of the Allequippa Club, and Wingfield exercised the right of an old friend to demand the reason for his descent upon Pittsburg. The editor led the way to his room and produced a portfolio of pen and ink and water-colour sketches of children. These he disposed about his room and invited Wingfield's admiration. There was undoubtedly genius in the things; the key of pathos and humour was struck with a true, firm touch. Most interesting of all, there were babies — a group of them — types of half a dozen races.

"We cried over that bunch at the office. We don't find the real thing every day and when it comes it's always out of the dark. It's a woman and she lives here. I suppose you never by any chance heard of her."

Wingfield had already taken off his glasses to read the name scrawled at the bottom of one of the drawings — a newsboy with an infectious grin on his face.

"Jean Morley," Wingfield read aloud. "Oh, certainly I know her. It's really most remarkable

that you should have recognized her talent. I suppose you have come here to offer her a dollar apiece for her sketches — I advise you not to lay yourself open to the humiliation of her scornful rejection of your offer. The girl is wonderful — wonderful! Anything less than a thousand dollars for what you have here would be preposterous; I would give her more myself and hold the drawings as an investment. And I happen to know that *This Busy World* has already offered to make a contract with her covering a term of years," he added carelessly, readjusting his glasses.

Wingfield would not have lied to a stranger, but he had known Richardson all his life; and besides, Jean was a pretty girl and Dick Wingfield's soul was not brass. The situation was much to his liking. Richardson was a man of distinction, a poet and essayist of high attainments, and as such Wingfield would take good care of him for the honour of Pittsburg. He was already wondering whether his mother would undertake a dinner in Richardson's honour, with two or three girls he knew, and with Jean present — the surprise of the occasion. It was not an opportunity to miss. He had planned the dinner before Richardson had ceased praising the drawings.

"I would appreciate it if you would help me find the girl. I'm in a hurry; we want her to illustrate a series of articles we've got in type — 'The Child as a Wage-earner.' These drawings strayed into the office just as we were discussing illustrators and she's

first choice. The matter is urgent. I must find out if she will undertake it and get out of here to-morrow."

The larger prospect faded; but Wingfield called Mrs. Blair by telephone and the Lady of Difficult Occasions rose as he knew she would. The editor of the *Hemisphere* was a celebrity, Jean was her own protégée; there was every reason why Mrs. Blair should bring them together at her own board, and Wingfield was to be of the party — he did not have to suggest it. Whether Wayne should be included was a question Wingfield left to Mrs. Blair and she deemed it best that Wayne and Jean should not meet. For while Wayne was wrestling with his spirit in the hills, Mrs. Blair and Jean had seen much of each other and Jean had told her friend the whole story of her acquaintance with Wayne, and her belief that she was still bound to Joe. Here was a complication that gave even Fanny Blair pause!

She hurried Jean to a shop to find a ready-made gown for the occasion and otherwise exercised the right of guardianship. As Fanny Blair's last girl fiddler had eloped with a cornetist who already had a wife or two, her faith in budding genius needed this restoration.

"But Lord bless you, I don't know Mrs. Blair," cried the editor when Wingfield told him that they were to meet the artist at the Blair house.

"That's nothing. You are ignorant by so much, that's all, and Mrs. John McCandless Blair is a liberal education — a post-graduate course, in fact. It would be impossible for Miss Morley to negotiate

with you without her. And I myself have taken the deepest interest in the girl from the beginning. The prettiest girl in Pennsylvania — and I am not ignorant of the processions of beauty you can see in Philadelphia on Saturdays at high noon, if you have an excuse for being in Chestnut Street as the divinities seek lobster and ice cream at Vertini's."

Mrs. Blair wept — it was her way — when Jean's drawings were displayed in her library; those sketches did have heart in them! The editor of the *Hemisphere* was less emotional, but his praise of Jean's work was ample. He explained the character and scope of the text to be illustrated. Jean would have to visit the South and West to find the types needed, and it would be necessary to begin at once. After dinner the editor and Jean discussed details, with proof sheets of the articles before them. They were bound to make an impression; they were the work of specialists, and comprised a careful economic and social study of child labour and were to be embodied in a book following their use in the periodical; the commission was important to the artist and all concerned. The editor had prepared a schedule of the drawings he thought most desirable, with a memorandum of the times at which they must be delivered. The amount named for the work was generous; Wingfield, graceful liar that he could be, had helped here, and after Jean had taken counsel of Mrs. Blair in a corner, a contract was signed — Jean's hand a little wobbly for one who could draw so well.

Mrs. Blair's instructions that no one should

be admitted that evening were conclusive enough as against the world in general; but her door was never shut in her brother's face. Wayne, having missed Walsh, had dined alone at the Club and afterward sought Wingfield vainly by telephone. He was restless and unhappy and set out for his sister's merely to have something to do. That he and Jean should be in the same town and not see each other struck him as the bitterest irony. He missed the peace of the mountains and the daily discipline of his wood-chopping.

It was in this humour that he came upon the animated scene at his sister's that had Jean for its central figure — a new Jean, with the happiness of renewed youth bright in her countenance. She had seen him before he made her out from the doorway, and she prepared herself for the meeting while he was making the editor's acquaintance. She had wondered all these long days since she had watched him from the window of the boarding-house parlour how it would be if they ever met again; but she had not expected anything like this. The most her imagination had conjured had been a chance meeting in the street.

Wayne was taken into the great secret by Mrs. Blair and ran his eyes over the drawings before he spoke to Jean.

"It's splendid, perfectly splendid!" he cried, but Mrs. Blair got him away for the time being. Her father's business affairs had given her great concern and she seized the moment to attack Wayne in regard

to them. But Wayne was not to be disposed of so easily; his eyes followed Jean, and when she laughed at some of Wingfield's banter he stopped abruptly in his answer to one of Mrs. Blair's questions and the look in his eyes told the story, and would have told it to a less observing woman than Fanny Blair. She sighed as he rose and moved across the room to where Jean sat turning in her hands her copy of the editor's contract. It would hurt nothing this once — so Mrs. Blair suffered him to talk to her.

"I've been away," he began, "and a great deal seems to be happening; here you are at the point of being famous. I always felt that it would come — that you would make good, and you have rung the bell at the first shot."

"But it wasn't the first. I had sent portfolios of drawings to a lot of publishers and editors who didn't care for them at all. And of course, Mr. Richardson was only interested because he happened to be looking for that kind of thing."

"There are other artists doing that sort of work — good ones — of established reputation — and the *Hemisphere* prefers you. You can't get away from that."

"Well, it's nice, anyhow. And now I must do the work; it will keep me very busy, if I finish in time."

"You will do it and it will be a success; there is no doubt of that. And we shall all be proud of you. It's something to know a genius these days."

This success would, he knew, raise higher the barriers between them, and he was jealous of her

art as he had not been of Joe. Her work meant more to her than Joe had meant or could mean. It was preposterous that this woman should bear the burden of an obligation to a man like Joe Denny. Her new gown clothed her in a fresh vesture of youth. She was no longer the obscure, forlorn and shabby art student, but a young woman whose name would go far and whose eyes were bright with the elixir of success — that most potent of cordials. He wondered whether he should see again the gray mist of the sea steal across the lovely violet of her eyes; and upon the thought the soft shadow fell and the sweet gravity that became her so well came into her face. The change seemed to bring her back to him; and he grasped at the fleeting mood eagerly.

"I have seen things differently since I saw you last," he began, and all unconsciously her head bowed as though under the weight of remembrance. "I let go of myself again — it was hideous; you heard of it?"

"Yes, I knew. I was sorry."

"But Paddock took me away to the house of some friends of his; they were good to me. I sent you a telegram Christmas — I wonder if you got it?"

"Yes; and I was glad you remembered me."

She did not tell him that she had cried over it in her dingy room or that at Paddock's settlement house, where she had gone to help in the children's entertainment, she had learned from the minister where he was, or that the knowledge that he was in a place of safety had been the real peace of her Christmas.

"It was a lonely place up there in the mountains and the first night ——"

He had felt that he must tell her everything, but he could not do it; he could not confess how narrowly he had escaped taking himself out of life by the back door. Her own fine courage, the success now crowning her endeavour — these things taunted him; he could not tell her how near he had been to throwing down his sword in the face of the enemy. With courage, sincerity and industry she was storming the citadels of a world that had heaped favours upon him only to magnify the humiliation of his failures. He must speak with confidence of his to-morrows to this woman if he would hold her respect.

"I'm going to try harder. I guess I've never tried at all. I've got a job: Walsh is going to take me into his office; you've seen him, he's a grand old fellow. While you are off making your drawings I shall be trying to learn how to sell groceries. Isn't that most uninteresting?"

She bent toward him eagerly.

"Oh, no, it is fine! It is just the right thing. I am glad — so glad!"

His heart bounded as he saw how pleased she was — no cloud now on those violet seas; and she smiled that quick rare smile of hers.

"Please don't grow too famous to remember a poor struggling jobber in canned goods and such. You see, you've rather put it up to me to do something. I shan't get very high — I couldn't — but

I'm going to do the best I can. A man I met up there in the hills — a minister — a priest, he would call himself, made me feel my lack of importance in the world in a new way. He said he thought the devil wouldn't care for my soul — that I was a clumsy piece of Satan's practice-work, not worth putting on exhibition in the hall of fame down below. That took the conceit out of me; I had imagined myself a superior article."

"Well, when you're at work you won't have time to think of such things," she answered, not sanctioning his way of joking about it.

"But I shall think of you every day, and I shall wonder where you are and how your work prospers; and sometimes I shall see you ——"

"We shall always be good friends, of course."

But he would not take warning of her words or her manner; this new career was drawing her away from him and the thought of losing her was intolerable.

"If you haven't taken that step, if you are still free, won't you give me my chance?"

"No, no! Please don't spoil this evening for me; I know you don't mean to be unkind — but you are!"

"But why should you throw away your freedom; you owe something to yourself!" he pleaded. "See what has come to you; think of what you would lose if you let this imagined duty to Joe interfere with your success."

"I made up my mind that night when I told you my story; and I shall not change it. Poor Joe! I

had hurt him so that he doesn't want to take me back — but the tie exists. Nothing you could say would ever change my feeling about it."

The lines of his face hardened and his jaw set. Having, like a child, resolved to be "good," he saw no reason why he should not at once pluck the stars for his reward. The penitent is never so humble but that he demands immediate share in paradisiacal joys.

"You will be leaving at once. I suppose I shall not see you again," he remarked, the dejection showing in his face.

"Yes; I shall be going in a day or two, but I shan't forget you. You are one of my friends; we mustn't let anything spoil that."

Mrs. Blair's eyes were upon her and she rose. Richardson and Wingfield were leaving, and the editor had some last words for Jean. Mr. Blair was to take the men down in his car and Jean left with them, wrapped — for the good woman would not be denied — in Mrs. Blair's ermine opera cloak.

Wayne was pacing the floor, smoking, when Mrs. Blair came back from seeing Jean off. She threw her arms about her brother impulsively.

"Oh, Wayne; there are not many women like that! I always wondered if you would ever really care, and what she would be like; and now this — this ——!"

He was not surprised that she knew it all; Fanny always knew everything.

"And to think that when she offered to go back to that vagabond Joe, he wouldn't have it that way

— wouldn't listen to it! And here she is left high and dry with her preposterous conscience; it's that wretched Jimmy Paddock that's responsible. I didn't suppose I could ever feel that divorce is right in any case; but here were two silly young children eloping. And a girl with this beautiful genius in her, seeing the awfulness of what she had done, fled from it. If Joe hadn't nearly died of pneumonia and if Jimmy Paddock hadn't convinced her that marriages are made in heaven and that the courts of Pennsylvania haven't any jurisdiction over them — well?" she concluded irrelevantly.

"Nothing, Fanny; only the spectacle of the Pennsylvania courts assuming jurisdiction of the heavenly kingdom tickles me. I'm sorry that I can't talk about Jean — not now. It's great that she's struck it, and that must be enough for me, I guess. Good night; I'm going to walk home."

CHAPTER XXXII

AN ANGRY ENCOUNTER

"I'M LEAVING the office on the first; I'm going down to the mercantile company with Walsh."

This was the first intimation Wayne had given his father of the proposed change. He had purposely waited until this last hour before making the announcement, to avoid discussing the matter. Colonel Craighill looked up from his desk quickly and compressed his lips before speaking. It was a blow he had not expected and he did not meet it at once. Wayne turned uneasily and as his father made no response he added:

"You remember that I kept my interest there and Tom says I can be of use to him. I am of no use here — and never have been."

"In other words, you prefer Walsh to me as an ally. Very well, I might have expected it. This is the last irony of my parenthood and it is quite fitting; quite in keeping."

In the silence following the announcement Wayne's heart had been tenderer toward his father than in many a day. It was not so easy after all to leave him; at a word he might have relented; but the swords of resentment unsheathed with a sharp clatter and his spirit declared war.

"What's quite fitting; what's in keeping?" he demanded.

"Your desertion, your apostasy. After these years of humiliation you have brought me, you throw me off as lightly as though you were a clerk who had worked here a week and left to take another job. But it's what I deserve for my forbearance. It's too bad you didn't go sooner. But it's quite characteristic that you should wait till there was a chance of your being of some service to me, as age comes on and a son's right arm would mean much — you wait for a strategic moment and then fire your last volley and leave. No servant ever served me so ill. But I deserve it; go to Walsh; very likely you and he will find yourselves well suited to each other."

"Walsh did your work for you for twenty years; it's rather base of you to visit your contempt on him now. If you don't know it, every man in Pittsburg knows what Tom Walsh was to you — he was your brains."

Colonel Craighill jumped to his feet, the blood suffusing his face.

"You ungrateful dog — the reason I dispensed with Walsh was that he's crooked — he's a man of no principles, he's a rascal!"

"But it took you twenty years to find it out — twenty years of faithful service and you gave a farewell dinner to a rascal, *your* rascal, and bade him God-speed."

"I didn't know then what he was!" roared Colonel

Craighill, "but I have learned since. He lied about the mercantile company to get it away from me. He falsified the statements and I sold to him on an inventory he made himself. No doubt you were in collusion with him and now you're to be paid for robbing your father. It's all of a piece; it's what I have trained you for and my reward for shielding you and bearing with you all these years."

"For your prayers, your hypocritical snivelling, for wearing the martyr's crown because you had the ill luck to be my father! Every time I got drunk you re-sanctified yourself; you were glad when I went bad because it brought your own virtue into higher relief. You never met me like a man, because you're only the outer shell of a man; there's no heart in you; no soul in you! And don't be too sure you deceive the people of this town; they know you and just now they're sneering because they know you've been in trouble and they're glad to find that anything as perfect as you are has clay feet. Walsh never said a word of ill to me of you; he served you with the humility you demanded and the best things you ever did he managed and you got the glory. And he left you because you wanted to sail out into showy schemes like that Mexican fake and he knew where they would land you. The finest testimony of your high character is poor old Gregory who trusted you — trusted you like a child because you were the great Roger Craighill who could do no wrong; and when you had got that Sand Creek deal through you didn't know him any more, but

turned him over to your lawyer. And he's sitting out there now in the reception room waiting for you to see him; he's been trying to see you all winter, but you won't let him in. And Addie, poor Addie up there at the house, you deceived her, too, for she thought she was marrying a man; and the night you went to Boston without her because you were afraid to spring her on the Brodericks, she found you out."

"I should strike you down for this — for speaking to me of my wife in such infamous terms. The fact that you assume the rôle of her champion is an insult to her — a flagrant, unpardonable insult!"

"It's you that insulted her; you were ashamed of her; men treat their mistresses better than that! She deserved better of the great Roger Craighill."

Suspicion and distrust were warmed in the fierce flames of Roger Craighill's anger.

"Why are you so eager to champion her? How dare you speak of her?"

"I'm sorry for her, that's the reason; more than that, I knew her before you did — a poor girl with a hideous mother tied about her neck, and she married you in the mistaken belief that you would honour and respect her, and when your passion cooled a little you began to treat her just as you have treated me — as an encumbrance to be borne and suffered. And don't you believe, because I never told you I had known her, that she's not a good woman — she's so superior to you that you are not

worthy to fasten her shoes — that's what I think of her — and this is what I think of you."

The door slammed upon Wayne as he returned for the last time to his own room, and began collecting the papers in his desk. He had burned his bridges and there was no retracing his steps. His heart was still hot; he experienced no contrition, though he regretted immediately his reference to Addie, which could only react upon her. But in the main he was satisfied that he had settled accounts with his father at last.

The door was closed between Roger Craighill and his son, blown shut by the winds of wrath. Colonel Craighill sat staring at the wall that separated them. These last weeks had tried him sorely and his head sank upon his breast and he remained there late, pondering his affairs. The stringency of the fall and winter had pinched hard; his own buoyant optimism had been badly shattered by it. The control of the towering Craighill building had passed from the Colonel's hands. When the banks demanded additional collateral on loans that had been carried easily for several years he found that the securities in a number of his enterprises were looked upon coldly by discount boards. Even the Hercules National, in which he had been a director since its organization and which had always readily accommodated him, called his loans on a hint, it was said, from the comptroller's office. It was trying to Colonel Craighill's pride to be summoned to the private rooms of banks to discuss his

own affairs with men who had suddenly ceased to be admiring friends and were now gravely inquisitorial. They did their best for him, though; even his bonds and stock in the Craighill building corporation were "deposited" — that was the disingenuous term — with three trustees for the benefit of creditors and this was a salve to his wounded vanity. With a breathing time and the return of confidence Colonel Craighill declared he would reclaim them. His faith in the great Mexican plantation scheme was unshaken, and his colonial investments would yet prove his wisdom. He begged his inquisitors, in their austere mahogany cabinets, to have patience and all would be well; values were intact; credit only had been stampeded; and he cited world conditions with his accustomed familiarity, which, however, did not relieve the immediate pressing fact that he owed a large sum of money which he could not pay.

An unexpected attack in another quarter had disturbed him greatly; and oddly enough it was the Reverend James Paddock of the parish house at Ironstead who had fired an arrow into the weakest plate of Colonel Craighill's armour. The minister had written a letter to the authorities directing attention to the vile condition of a group of tenements in Ironstead, not knowing who owned them, and it happened that one of the objectionable buildings belonged to Colonel Craighill. The *Mail*, a vigorous young independent newspaper, made the most of this opportunity in its reddest ink. The fact that

this leading citizen, well known for his labours in behalf of the negroes in the South and for other notable philanthropies far removed from Pittsburg, should thus ignore the squalor at his own door, aroused the *Mail's* righteous indignation, and it demanded an investigation by the local branch of the Municipal Service League, of which Colonel Craighill was the national president. "Colonel Craighill" — to quote the *Mail* — "is an excellent type of the after-dinner reformer, posing in the lime-light abroad, but avoiding the discomforts that attend sincere, vigorous participation in home affairs. It is not our esteemed fellow-citizen we are after; it is the smug complacency and cant of many men of similar high position in our American cities, who wax eloquent in bemoaning our political depravity, but through cowardice or their own culpability are never heard from when there is any real work to be done."

Paddock was sorry to have caused this explosion and he called on the Colonel to explain; but Colonel Craighill's rage was not appeased. He wanted to sue the newspaper, but his lawyer advised against it; the conditions in the tenement were about as the *Mail's* artist portrayed them, and there was no disputing the fact that the Colonel owned the property, though, to be sure, he had lately mortgaged it. The refusal of the *Star* to spring to his defense astounded Colonel Craighill. It was not the *Star's* business, he learned, to correct the *Mail's* misstatements, and the *Star*, smarting because the *Mail*

had scored a "beat," began, out of sheer pique, a vigorous attack on the city administration.

Colonel Craighill believed himself sincere in his devotion to reform work, and the *Mail's* assault was unfortunate in that it evoked echoes of the familiar cynicisms against all movements for our political and moral uplift. Gentlemen in white waistcoats at banquet tables cannot re-create mankind by resolution; nor do their failures mean that the people are unsound. Politics and government are practical matters. Democracy is an ideal. And as such it can never be fully realized. It gathers strength through successive experiments and reincarnations. The goal, always a little further on, is sought in faith and abandoned in despair, but its changing light can never outshine the hope in man's heart.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE HIGH MOMENT OF THEIR LIVES

WAYNE dined at the Club with Walsh the next evening and told him of the break with his father. Walsh listened in frowning silence to the end.

"It's a mistake; it's a great mistake. I'm sorry it's happened."

"There was no other way; it had to come. He had no right to jump me because he's in trouble. I'm not responsible for all his mistakes; I'm one of them myself and it's enough. He's hot because he let go of the mercantile company; he has to find some excuse now for doing it and he says you tricked him into selling. The money you paid him went into the hole without making any impression on it."

"I paid him a fair price and he knows it. The figures were all checked by the audit company. But you had no business breaking with him. I don't like it. He means to be square; he's taken his business too easy and now that some of these fancy schemes he's in have gone bad and the banks are worrying him you oughtn't to have allowed him to get hot. You oughtn't to have done it, boy. And, besides, you might have helped him. You must

be good for nigh on to eight hundred thousand dollars — all good stuff. It's all clean. You don't owe anything, do you?"

"No; nothing worth mentioning."

"You ought to help him. It would be the fine thing to do. He's your father — you can't get away from that."

But Wayne was not in a mood for magnanimity. Walsh dwelt at length on his duty, on what was, in the old fellow's phrase, "the right thing." He indicated concrete instances of what might be done to help Colonel Craighill back to a firm footing. Certain things should be dropped as worthless encumbrances; the real estate ventures would work out in time; various stocks now pledged as collateral should be redeemed. The pledging of half of Wayne's estate would strengthen his father immensely with the creditors and might save him from ruin. Wayne listened attentively to Walsh; he saw that it might be done, but he felt no impulse to act on Walsh's suggestions: he was Roger Craighill's son no longer.

"Sorry I can't see it your way, Tom, but I have my side of the case, too. That row yesterday proves how far apart father and I have been. If our relations had been right and what they ought to be he would have asked me for help, or I would have gone to him. But he's always taken that high and mighty way about things, treating me as though I were a fool, incapable of understanding. He doesn't really appreciate the serious trouble he's in.

He hardly admits that it's a temporary embarrassment; you know his way. No, Tom, I don't feel called on to do the dutiful-son act and dump down on his desk the good assets I inherited from my grandfather and have added to a little bit on my own account. I don't owe father anything — not even money. I've ordered my cars sent to a public garage; I'm going up now to pack my things."

"The house is all clear; that's yours."

"Yes," replied Wayne with sudden asperity; "it's my own house I'm leaving."

"Um. I hope these troubles of the Colonel's won't be hard on the little woman up there."

He spoke half to himself, and when Wayne asked what he had said, Walsh grunted "Um" and rose from the table.

Wayne found a letter in the club office. It was from Jean, written in New York. A large, plain sheet of paper with the writing confined to a square in the centre; the handwriting small, even, distinctive. It was the first message he had ever received from her and he carried it to a quiet corner of the lounging room to read.

"My grandfather is again in Pittsburg. He persists in pressing his claim against your father, though I have begged him to drop it. I am sorry to trouble you about such a matter, but if you can see him I wish you would try to persuade him to go home. He has brooded over his claim until he is no longer himself, and he insisted on staying there at the boarding house when I left.

"The Richardsons have been kind to me in every way. I am at their house and shall be here all the time I spend in New York. I go to my work over on the East Side every day, and the settlement house people look out for me and help me find the models I need.

"I hope you are well and that the new work with Mr. Walsh will prosper."

Many readings could not torture into this unexpected message any personal interest in himself. This was one reflection, but it was something that she had thought of him in her perplexity. Her shabby old grandfather, with his long-neglected claim, was an unfortunate incumbrance; it was too bad the girl had to be bothered with him. It flashed upon him that he might go to New York and see her, but he dismissed the idea at once. It would only distress her, and he was Wayne Craighill, and to call on Jean at the Richardsons might injure her — a bitter reflection, but one he met squarely. In the end, after he had studied it in all possible angles, he felt happier for this contact with something that had touched her hand. It was almost like her own presence, this sheet of paper with its simple, straightforward message, and the block of script that showed the artist's "touch." He would find the bothersome grandfather to-morrow and settle the old claim out of his own pocket and send him back to Denbeigh.

Wayne ordered a motor from a public garage, and rode to his father's house. It had been his

intention to get his things together and leave without seeing his father again. The lower floor was deserted and he kept on to his own room. The remodelling of the house shortly before his mother's death had made no change in the rooms that had been set apart to him in his youth. There were things there — pieces of furniture that had been in his grandfather Wayne's house, a number of old engravings and some books, that he could send for later. He packed his trunk as for a journey; making a pile of the excess clothing to be called for later by the club valet. Then he filled a suit case and portmanteau and rang for the house man to carry them down. As he stood at the door taking a last look at the walls that had known him so long, the little travelling clock on the mantel, which had timed him during his years at St. John's and at the "Tech," tinkled nine, and on the hint, he picked it up and reopened the portmanteau to make room for it.

The clock on the stair was still chiming as he closed the door. He was rather sorry now that he had not made an effort to say good-bye to Mrs. Craighill — poor Addie; this was, in all the circumstances, almost desertion, this leaving her to fight her troubles alone. To his surprise her sitting room door was open and she stood just outside it, leaning over the stair rail, as though intent upon something below. She raised her hand warningly.

"What's the matter, Addie?"

"There's someone in the library with your father. I heard you when you came, and then a moment later this card was brought up. Your father was in my sitting room talking and he seemed very angry at being interrupted — it was a matter of business, he said, and the man had no right to follow him home."

Wayne took the card which she had in her hand; it bore the name of Andrew Gregory written in pencil. The old claimant, denied access to Colonel Craighill at his office, and smarting under his wrongs, had sought audience here.

"I have heard angry voices once or twice. You had better see what's the matter."

She stole downstairs after him. The portières in the library doors were drawn, but voices could be heard quite distinctly, and Wayne recognized the shrill pipe of Gregory raised in angry denunciation. Mrs. Craighill was greatly perturbed and clung to Wayne's arm as the angry debate continued. The discussion seemed to be approaching an acute phase, and Wayne strode toward the door. Gregory had not been treated right; Wayne had felt that from the beginning, and for Jean's sake he had meant to effect some adjustment with the old man; but Gregory's presence in the house created a new situation. Jean's letter was in his pocket, asking him to see that no harm came to her grandfather. It was his first commission from her hand and the thought of this sent him on to the door. Gregory was not sparing of vituperation; he heaped harsh

Saxon epithets upon Colonel Craighill, who roared back at him angrily.

"Get out of my house! You had no right to come here with your preposterous claim; I told you my lawyer would attend to you!"

"You didn't send me to your lawyer when you wanted my property, you lying hypocrite. And I'm going to publish you to the world now for what you are. There's no bigger scoundrel in the State of Pennsylvania than you; but now ——"

There was a dull sound as of a blow struck and a heavy fall as Wayne flung back the curtains. Colonel Craighill stood there, gazing down at old man Gregory, who lay upon his side, very still. Colonel Craighill's arm was extended, his body pitched slightly forward, as though palsied at the moment the blow had been struck. He turned a white face toward Wayne, who sprang into the room, with Mrs. Craighill close behind.

Wayne straightened the crumpled figure on the floor and Mrs. Craighill brought water and brandy from the dining room. The two bent over the fallen man, whose breath came in hard gasps. His eyes opened and shut several times and he tried to speak; then his muscles relaxed and he lay still. The marks of death were on him. Wayne and Mrs. Craighill exchanged a glance. She was perfectly cool and said calmly:

"It looks bad. Shall I call a doctor?"

"Wait a moment."

Wayne turned to his father, who had sunk into

"THERE WAS A DULL SOUND AS OF A BLOW STRUCK"

a chair and was cowering there, his eyes staring at the silent, inert figure stretched out on the floor. He knelt and put his head to Gregory's breast.

"He's dead, father," said Wayne quietly.

"Oh, God! he can't be dead! My blow could never have killed him!"

"There's no pulse — it's all over. We'd better think about this pretty hard for a minute. It will be too late when the doctor comes and the servants find out. We must know what story you want told about it."

Mrs. Craighill still crouched by the old man, and she put her hand to his heart now and satisfied herself that it had ceased to beat. She remained where she was, while Wayne stepped to the doorway and flung the curtains together.

"You struck him, and he is dead; what are we to do about it?" he demanded of his father.

"Why, it isn't possible, Wayne!" cried Colonel Craighill. "It was more in the way of pushing him from the room than a blow; it may have been on the breast — perhaps over his heart; I can't remember, but it couldn't have killed him — it's a faint — he will come around again all right. Try the brandy, Addie. If we call a doctor ——"

He was pitiful in his agitation and kept twitching at his collar and wringing his hands.

"The man is dead," said Mrs. Craighill. "We must have the doctor; but Wayne is right: before he comes you must know what you are going to

say to him; the matter will be reported; we must know what to say."

"It was heart disease; the blow could never have killed him," muttered Colonel Craighill.

Wayne knelt again by the quiet figure and laid his ear to the pulseless heart. Mrs. Craighill watched him as he rose, waiting for him to tell her to call the doctor. It was the high moment in all their lives, as she fully realized.

"The situation is just this, father," and Wayne's calmness seemed to reassure Colonel Craighill.

"Yes, yes!" he faltered.

"A man has died here in your house. You admit you struck him; and no matter whether death resulted from excitement or from your blow, the thing is ugly. A doctor must be called. Addie, go and telephone for Dr. Silvan, for Gardner, too, and for Wynn — try their houses. Silvan is nearest; call him last. There's no time for quibbling — what are we going to tell them when they come, and the coroner and the police? It's for you to say."

"Oh, my God, Wayne, what am I to do? I tell you I didn't kill him; I couldn't have killed him, it was more — why Wayne, you know ——"

"The man's dead, in your house, and you confess that you struck him. What are we going to say about it?"

Mrs. Craighill could be heard in the telephone room calling the doctors. Colonel Craighill paced the floor nervously. He whirled round, his face

twitching with excitement, and caught Wayne by the shoulder.

"If we could ignore the blow — if we could say — the man — died — dropped dead — that would be true — quite the truth."

"But you told me you struck him."

"Yes, yes; but it was the slightest touch of the hand — it was more in the way of pushing him from the room — you could hardly say I struck him — you could hardly call it an assault, could you, Wayne?"

It was the plea of a man begging for mercy; but contempt and scorn were gathering might in Wayne's heart. Mrs. Craighill was calling the third doctor, who lived nearest, and the time was short.

"You are Roger Craighill. What you say of this matter will be believed. But when the doctors ask how it happened, wouldn't it be as well to remember that I was in the house — and that I have no reputation to lose?"

The peace of the dead man at their feet hung upon the room. Colonel Craighill lifted his head, but he did not face his son.

"I don't understand you," he gasped.

"Yes," said Wayne, "I think you do understand," and he spoke the words slowly, with a sharp precision, but he smiled slightly. He forgot himself, his own life and its better aims; the new aspirations that had visited him during his long self-communing in the hills; the thought of his own honour; the precious faith in life and love that Jean Morley had

roused in him — all went down before this undreamed of, this exquisite vengeance. He had offered to assume responsibility for the death of this old man who lay stiffening there on the floor, and Roger Craighill — his father — would suffer it, would accept the sacrifice and connive at its fulfilment!

Wayne's eyes were not good to see as he watched his father for some sign. A long silence followed in which neither moved, and when Colonel Craighill turned toward his son it was with a guarded, furtive glance, as though he had hoped to find him gone.

"The doctors are on the way, all of them," said Mrs. Craighill at the door. "What else is there to do?"

"Nothing," said Wayne, "but this: when they come, if there's any question of a blow having been struck, I did it — *I did it.* And," he deliberated, "you'd better call Tom Walsh at the Allequippa Club and tell him to come up. He's a good hand with the newspapers and the police. Good night."

Wayne rode back to the city in the motor that had carried him home, and at the garage Joe, gossiping with the loafing chauffeurs, heard him order out his racing machine.

They had not met since Wayne's long absence in the hills, but Joe had learned from Paddock that Wayne was in a place of safety. Wayne's appearance at the garage and demand for the racer brought Joe up standing, and he took charge of the machine without a word.

Wayne hardly noticed him, so deep was his preoccupation; and this in itself seemed ominous to Joe.

"So you're going are you, Joe? Well, we're likely to be gone a long time," Wayne said, throwing his bags into the car. At the Allequippa Club he cashed a check for a thousand dollars and supplied himself with cigars.

And so they plunged into the night, over the rough roads of spring.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE HEART OF THE BUGLE

THEY came to Harrisburg, with the sun low in the west and a soft haze enfolding the capitol dome — that proud assertion of a commonwealth's strength and power that greets the eye of western pilgrims bound for Washington, and speaks of the pride of statehood — and no mean state, this!

The iron bones of the ponderable earth shook mightily when Pennsylvania was born. No light day's business, the bringing forth of this empire! Mountains to rear and valleys to cut; broad rivers to set flowing in generous channels; forests to marshal and meadows to unroll, fair and open and glad with green things growing. Winter, running before the hounds of spring, hides snow like a miser in a myriad pockets of the hills and flies northward across the blue lakes to escape the gleeful laughter of freed springs and singing brooks.

Scratch the crust and you may kindle the world's hearth; scatter seed and fields were never so green. A fair prospect for the eye, but greater the hope in the heart of man. Fortunate nation this, to have so secure a keystone in the arch of states! The spirits of the pioneers, haunting the hilltops, gaze down in pride upon the teeming valleys. You, sober

ones of the broad brims, the axe has gone deep into the forests you came to people; and you in whose blood the Scottish pipes skirl and in whose heads flash the wit of Irish mothers, no land ever received sounder or saner or nobler pilgrims. And you, too, plodding Dutchmen, far-flung drift of the Rhenish Palatinate, you were not so slow and dull after all, but wise in your sowing and reaping. And call the roll of names dear to the Welsh hills and mark the lusty response. The soundest race-stocks in the world are grafted here. Let us be wary of these tales of plunder and corruption. The soil that knew Franklin is not so lightly to be yielded to perdition. Let us have patience, sneering ones; the last lumbering Conestoga has hardly faded into the west, and the making of states is rather more than a day's pastime! Verily, you paid dearly for this house of your law-makers — marble and bronze and lapis lazuli forsooth! But have a care that Wisdom and Honour are enthroned in those splendid halls — and with no pockets in their togas! Then let him that defileth the temple perish by the sword!

Wayne and Joe sat on a bench in the capitol grounds and fed the squirrels. They had inspected the building with care and Joe pronounced it good. The mood of depression with which Wayne had left home clung to him, but Joe, watching him narrowly, felt that the cloud was less dark to-day.

"This is nice grass," Joe observed. "I wonder why town grass is always nicer than country grass?"

Wayne smiled, and Joe was encouraged.

"You rankest of cockneys! There was good grass in the world before the day of lawn mowers. What do you think we're going to do now?"

This question had troubled Joe since their flight. He had an immense respect for Wayne; it was inconceivable that Mr. Wayne Craighill, a gentleman of property, a member of clubs, and a person otherwise indulged and favoured by Fortune, should not weary of this idle adventure and go home. He was confident that his companion would come to himself soon, but he would follow him to the world's end. Just now, as evening stole over the town, Joe was hungry and Wayne's indifference to the stomach's pinch was inexplicable. He did not dare propose that they seek food. Wayne was chief of the expedition and it was not for a mere private in the ranks to make suggestions.

"Did you ever try tramping?" Wayne asked presently.

"I can't say that I ever did, sir. You mean followin' the railroad and dodgin' the cops? Sleepin' in barns and jails and takin' a hand-out and a dog-bite at back doors. I ain't choosy, but I ain't for it, Mr. Wayne. I like the varnished cars myself."

Wayne did not debate the matter. He did not see his future clearly; the world was bitter in his mouth. He was fumbling the alphabet of life like a child with lettered blocks, soberly piling them in false positions with the X of unknown quantity in the middle. Once more he had suffered defeat at his

father's hands. The newspaper accounts of Andrew Gregory's death, on which he had pounced the day after his flight, had been the briefest: he had dropped dead while calling at the home of his old friend, Roger Craighill! Cheated again in satisfying his hatred of his father, the knowledge that Roger Craighill had lied to the doctors was poor consolation. He had submitted himself, a willing Isaac, to be laid on Abraham's altar, but the right to perish had been denied him. He was utterly morbid; there was no health in him. He was still, in Stoddard's phrase, a man in search of his own soul, though he did not know it. He had stood between the pillars of life without power to shake them down. He sat, as it were, on the steps beneath the high arch, a defeated Samson. But he would never go back; that was definitely determined; and by continuing his exile he might perhaps intensify his father's penitence, for Roger Craighill had, he assumed, some sort of conscience that would rest uneasy under the suppressed fact that he had laid violent hands on Andrew Gregory.

He felt, at times, a pity for his father's wife. She knew! And a man of less imagination could not have failed to picture the new relations of Roger Craighill and his wife with the common knowledge of that night hanging over them. There were people who might feel his loss out of their world; there were Wingfield and Walsh, and there was Paddock — he believed they would be sorry and miss him, but one man more or less in the grand

sum of things is nothing. He had failed in good as in evil intentions — failed even Jean who had asked him to care for her grandfather and save him from any such catastrophe as that which must now have brought misery upon her, for the old man's death had undoubtedly interrupted her work, and she must hate him for his worthlessness. He accepted his fate sullenly; his life was ill-starred, its ordering futile.

He recalled Joe from his contemplation of the squirrels and they went to a hotel that Joe had known in other days, and lodged for the night. Wayne had let his beard grow, and his clothes were the worse for rain and dust. But the differences between them were reconciled by these changes, and they looked like two mechanics in search of employment. The thousand dollars with which Wayne had left home had melted slowly. The bulk of the small bills was an embarrassment and he divided them with Joe.

The idea of losing himself in the world, of wandering free in the spring weather, took hold of his fancy. He had watched tramps from car windows with indifference or contempt, but he had read of men of wisdom who forsook the life to which they were born for the open road. Perhaps in the general sifting processes of nature and life this had been his predestined fate! He did not care one way or another. He was willing that henceforth Fate should shake the dice and he would abide by the decision. The lords of destiny might pass any

judgment they liked upon him: he was Wayne Craighill, and he would make no defense to any indictments they might lodge against him in their high tribunal.

He bought a pipe as better suited to his new rôle as a man of the road and they set out for a walk in the streets of Harrisburg. Laughter flashed out from open windows; boys and girls went sweethearting through the quiet streets; gay speech, floating out from verandas and doorsteps, contributed to the sense of spring. A girl's voice, singing to the strumming of a banjo, gave him a twinge of heartache. He was an alien in a strange land and the openness and simplicity and sweetness of the town life drove in upon him the realization of his own detachment from the world of order and peace. They went down to the river and listened to the subdued murmur of the Susquehanna moving seaward under the stars.

Wayne suddenly remembered Joe, sprawled on the grass beside him.

"See here, Joe, you're a good fellow and you've been bully in standing by me. But you'd better cut loose here. You must go back home to your job. It's not square to drag you along with me; I'm a busted community and I don't know where I'm going to land. I'm not ready to go home yet — you ought to understand that."

"I've signed my papers," replied Joe. "I'm not playin' for my release. I'm not much stuck on walkin', but if that's the sport, I'm in. If it's

crackin' safes or burnin' barns I'll divide the job. I'm no quitter."

Wayne said nothing, but he laid his hand for a moment on Joe's arm.

They went back to the hotel — not of the best — where they played billiards for an hour and went to bed. Wayne did not know it, but Joe watched until well past midnight to make sure that Wayne did not go down to the bar; then he scrawled and mailed a postal card to Paddock.

"All O. K. and sober. Don't follow; I'm on the job"; a message which Paddock bore promptly to Wingfield who passed it on to Walsh. Poor Paddock! His sad little smile gained in pathos those days! Wingfield at the Allequippa was better let alone; he leaned on Walsh, who had found a new and blacker cigar, and would not speak of Wayne.

"We'll leave the machine here until we want it again," said Wayne in the morning. "And we can express the suit cases to the next stop. We'll travel incog, as Jones and Smith. I'll match for the Smith; it's a name I've always admired."

He flipped a coin and pronounced himself Jones.

"Where shall we send the stuff?" asked Joe.

The porter was at that moment announcing a train in the hotel office and Wayne caught a name.

"Send it to Gettysburg," he said.

They stepped into the street and were at once launched upon their expedition. A shower in the early morning had laid the dust and sweetened the

air; the sky was never bluer; the young leaves brightened in the sun; the horizons were wistful with the hope and faith of May. The country silence soon enwrapt them like a balm. Joe began to whistle but gave it up. He looked back upon the haze that hung above the capitol and was homesick for paved ground and the buzz of trolleys.

"It's kind o' lonesome," he observed, so plaintively that Wayne laughed.

"Oh, you'll begin to like it after a while. When you get used to travelling this way you won't buy any more railroad tickets. I've read books about people who walked everywhere — all over Europe — because it's the best way to see the country."

"I guess we're more likely to write home for money. I wonder if they wouldn't give us a bite at that house over there."

"Not much they won't! You've got to be very regular at meals when you go to tramping and, besides, it isn't ten o'clock yet."

"It would be nice if apples were ripe. We tackled it at the wrong season for fruit. I think I could eat raw lettuce out of that garden."

For the greater part Wayne trudged in silence. They paused now and then to rest and beside a little creek they cut themselves sticks. Morning was never so long and at eleven o'clock Joe declared himself famishing and Wayne mercifully agreed to seek food.

"I'll tackle this house," suggested Joe, "and

try the dog's teeth, but I've always liked these pants," he added ruefully.

"As we're young at the game we'll omit that feature of the tramping business," Wayne replied. "For to-day we will be two scientists studying the farming methods of the country. We will pay for our dinner and save our trousers."

They chose the largest farmhouse in sight, made their appeal, and dined at the family table. Wayne paid generously for their entertainment and smoked a pipe with the farmer, who gave them permission to sleep in his barn. In the morning they dipped themselves in the neighbouring creek and paid for lodging and breakfast at a house farther on. They were a little footsore, but finding that Wayne had no intention of submitting himself to the indignities suffered by professional tramps, Joe went forward in livelier spirits. He was not without his pride, and he was ambitious that his hero should be respectable. At intervals Wayne chaffed him in his old familiar fashion, and this brought Joe almost to singing pitch.

"I guess this is all right," he vouchsafed, as they lounged in the shade and ate a luncheon purchased at a country store. A pail of milk procured at a farmhouse graced their banquet. Sobriety, Joe reflected, was assured so long as this life continued.

They preferred haymows to the beds that were offered them, and when it was found that they paid their way no one denied them. It grew intensely hot on the second day, and at night a thunder-storm

swept the land with loud cannonading. The lightning glowed at the cracks of the loft where they had found lodging; it seemed at times that the barn was wrapt in flame. They slept late the next morning, breakfasted and resumed their leisurely course. They rested often and indulged in siestas of length at noon. The wind and sun tanned them; Wayne with his reddish beard was hardly the man we have seen at the Allequippa Club.

They came upon a becalmed automobile in which a gentleman and a number of ladies were touring to Washington. The party was chafing at the enforced delay; and the two wanderers promptly shed their coats and lent assistance. When the damage was repaired the gentleman appraised their services and tendered payment. Joe, with scornful rejection on his tongue, was surprised to see Wayne accept the bill and lift his cap in acknowledgment. They watched the car gather speed and dip out of sight beyond a hill.

"I didn't suppose we'd take tips," remarked Joe meekly, looking at a two-dollar bill in his own hand.

"My dear companion in misery, we gentlemen of the road refuse nothing! And besides, it was cheap at the price. Any well-regulated garage would have taxed him ten dollars. And it pleased me to see that I'm so well disguised. I've sat at the same table with that man and he didn't know me from Adam. The barber and tailor make us, Joe — remember that I said so. I'm learning something

new every day and by the time we've walked around the world we'll be educated men."

"I'm afraid you'd lose me," grinned Joe. "I heard a train whistle a while ago. It almost gave me heart disease."

There were times now when Wayne seemed himself, but he was more and more inexplicable. When he sprawled under a tree during their long noonings Joe knew that he did not sleep, but stared silently at the sky; and as they trudged along many hours would pass in utter silence. And so, by devious ways, they came to Gettysburg.

They had gone astray many times when, at nightfall, they came unawares upon the battlefield. A fog born of recent rains rose from the wet earth and hung in broken clouds. They paused beside a fence, uncertain of directions. Suddenly a cry from Joe arrested Wayne's attention. Near at hand a horse and rider seemed flung upward into the misty starlight. The erect figure of the man, the arched neck and upraised foot of the horse, were startlingly vivid. The weird spectacle held them fascinated. At any moment the mystical horseman might take flight and gallop into the enfolding fog in pursuit of his lost legion. Other figures, equally fantastical, and ghostly monuments rose against the starry sky out of the drifting fog-ribbons. Joe, staring about, cried aloud in fear as he stumbled against a cannon. Wayne explained that they were on the Gettysburg battlefield and that these were memorials of dead soldiers.

"It's too woozy for me," declared Joe, and they sought the town and found their bags and lodging for the night.

They woke in the morning to find it Memorial Day, with excursions of veterans pouring in for a celebration. They followed their own devices, keeping away from the crowd, and late in the afternoon rested at the foot of Warren's statue on Little Round Top. Wayne had bought a map and he opened it to fix the lines of Pickett's assault. His blood tingled as he grasped the significance of the famous charge, gazing down upon the field of death. He explained it to Joe and they rose as by one impulse and took off their caps.

"They were men, Joe; it takes men with the real stuff in them to do that."

Scattered over the field, sightseers followed the events of the long-vanished July days. An old man in the blue blouse of the Grand Army of the Republic toiled slowly up Little Round Top and stationed himself near them. He was muttering to himself, and so intent upon his own thoughts that he did not see them. He pointed with his hat as though demonstrating some controverted point, and shook his head, and Wayne and Joe eyed him wonderingly. The veteran's lean figure was erect; he thrust his stick under his arm and looked down upon the battlefield, the wind playing softly in his gray hair. He turned toward Cemetery Ridge and saw the men behind him. A wild look came into his bleared eyes and he grasped Wayne's arm, whispering:

"It's in the bugle! It's in the bugle!"

"You were a soldier in this battle?" asked Wayne, not understanding.

"I was in many battles, young man. It's the bugle that does the mischief; pluck the heart out of the bugle and drum and men won't kill each other any more. Many a man I've bugled down to death."

He dropped his head upon his breast. A bird sang in the thicket below. On the heights beyond a bugle sounded, faint as though from a far-off time. The old man shrank away; then he began to speak, in the hoarse, broken voice of age, but coherently, as though reciting an oft-told tale:

"We had a boy captain with beautiful brown eyes, who had left college to go into the army. That boy, with his handful of cavalry, felt bigger than old Napoleon and we were as proud of him as he was of us. Early in the war we were sent out on a scout along the Chickahominy and were going back to our brigade when we ran plump into a bunch of the enemy's cavalry that had been out feeling our line. They were just coming up out of a ford, and it was a surprise on both sides, but our captain laughed and said:

"'The charge, trumpeter!'

"I let go with the bugle and we slapped into them right at the edge of the water. There was a bad mess for a few minutes, then back we went with the gray boys at our heels. We fought up and down the road, as though we were only playing

a game; sometimes we drove them and then they drove us. On our second dash I felt my horse's hoof plunk soft onto a dead man, and I remember how queer it made me feel. We had to win that ford, and the other fellows wanted it just as bad as we did. Well, it was nearly dark when we began that foolishness, and a good many of the boys had dropped out of their saddles, and a few horses were running up and down with us, just for company I guess, or because they knew the calls and followed the bugle. I remember how the little moon hung over the trees and the stars came out, but our captain kept up the fight. It was all like a lark, but silly, for we were in between the lines where we might have brought on a general engagement with all the racket we were making. I remember thinking the game would last forever, as we charged and wheeled and flung ourselves at the gray boys; and every time we swung at them again there were more soft thumps where my horse struck dead men. I have dreamed about that a thousand times — the scared little moon, and the rattle of accoutrements and the pounding hoofs, and the yells, and the crack of pistols; but it was mostly the sabre, splashing and cutting. I felt that now I had got the hang of it, it would be just as easy to bugle the stars out of the sky as to sound charge and recall there by the ford. Well, we got the ford all right, but when we splashed through to the other side there was only about half of us left, and I felt sick and giddy when I looked down and saw the little captain was

gone and the lieutenant was riding by me where that brown-eyed boy had been.

"That was only the beginning and I got hardened fast enough; but when the war was over I used to wake up at night and think of all the battles I'd fought in, and try to count up the men I had bugled out to die. Then I married and had a home for a while, but my wife died, and those old times began to get bigger and bigger and now I never look back to anything but just those days of the camp, and the fights; and the bugle sings in my ears all the time as though it was calling to the men I sent into battles where they died!"

"War's an ugly business; somebody has to be killed," said Wayne kindly, moved to pity by the veteran's emotion.

"I've trumpeted my thousands down to death," he answered; and then, clearing his throat, he went on:

"I dream every night that I'm on a high place — not here, but a grayish sort of hill with a gray cloud hanging over it, and I look down and see long lines of them marching."

"Them?" Wayne asked.

"Ghosts, the ghosts of dead soldiers, marching with their heads bowed down the way tired soldiers march at night. And when one line passes, another trumpeter strikes up and another army of the same tired ghosts follows right after. It's all mighty still — you never hear any sounds at all except the trumpet, and it's muffled and choked — not even

"GHOSTS, THE GHOSTS OF DEAD SOLDIERS"

when the cavalry come along or the artillery. You know how moving guns rumble like thunder when they go along a hard road? Well, you never hear even the cannon, but the cavalry ride with their heads down, like the infantry, and the horses with their noses against their knees almost; and the artillerymen sit on the caissons with their arms folded and their heads bowed as though they were asleep. I can't make out where they came from or where they are going; they just came out of nowhere and go nowhere — but they never stop coming. And the trumpeters blow back all the men that have ever died in battle since the world began — so that they are years and years passing by — that's the way it seems in my dream. Then I'm all alone on the hill, and I know it's my turn to sound the trumpet; and something clicks in my throat when I try to blow, and I can't make a sound, and as I keep trying and trying I wake up; but I never can make them come. I can't bring back my dead men out of the dust the way the others did, and I sit up and cry when I remember how I killed them."

He ceased as abruptly as he had begun, stared fixedly at Wayne and Joe and then slowly descended, muttering and shaking his head. When he was out of sight the two stood silently gazing after him. Wayne drew his hand across his forehead several times before he spoke.

"Men live for things and they die for things. That poor old fellow has lost his mind brooding

over the horror of war. They didn't do it for themselves — the men who fought that war — they did it for the country, and for you and me who weren't born. I wonder — I wonder how it would be to do something just once that was for somebody else?"

Then he remembered what Jean had said to him in his father's library, that we must serve ourselves before we attempt to serve others. He applied this to himself tentatively, wondering whether any philosophy was really applicable to his case. Joe spoke to him; he wanted to discuss the old soldier's story, but Wayne did not heed him. He was looking dreamily down upon the tranquil landscape. Then he slapped his hands together as was his way when a new thought took hold of him.

"Joe."

"Yes, sir."

"I wonder how it would seem to go to work."

"Well, there's always your roost in the high buildin' and buttons to press for the slaves," suggested Joe cheerfully.

"Don't be a fool, Joe. I mean work — the kind that real men do, digging or planting, or any kind of thing that breaks your back and makes you dead tired — the work men do who would do that ——" and he levelled his arm toward the field where Pickett's legion had charged through the hail-swept wheat field.

Joe was not equal to this; here was a man born immune from the primal curse, first turning tramp and sleeping in barns, and now soberly threatening

to go to work. So unaccountable a frame of mind put Joe on guard; very likely Wayne was preparing for another spree and Joe was troubled.

The next morning Wayne, without explanation, laid their course toward the north; but Joe thought he knew where they were going.

CHAPTER XXXV

GOLDEN BRIDGE

THEY followed the Susquehanna northward into Jean's country — "my country" she had called it. They saw dawn and sunset brighten the glad water into silver and gold and bronze. They moved slowly, for it is sweet to loiter in that lovely valley when June is young, and a man in search of his soul may catch glimpses of it on the hilltops. When the days were hot they tramped at night and many pleasant adventures were theirs. We are foolish — we men — in our loving, thinking that we can hide the blind god's arrow when it quivers in our hearts; and these men believed that each hid from the other his happiness in the knowledge that they journeyed toward her hills — "my country!" They loitered the more because Wayne knew she might not be there; she must be about her errands in the South and West, and he had no idea what effect her grandfather's death might have had upon her affairs. At any rate it would be sweet to see the hills of her youth and the places that had known her.

They paused one afternoon at a little town to which their bags had been expressed. They had now

come into the region where the irregular outlines of the anthracite breaker are roughly etched on the horizons, and Joe at once found acquaintances. The prospect of a baseball contest between the local nine and its formidable rival from a neighbouring town thrilled the community. Joe's eligibility as an amateur was not discussed; the opposing nine openly boasted of a retired professional. He was got into uniform without ado, and put his left arm in commission with a few hours' practice. The young fellow's joy in this opportunity to display his skill emphasized to Wayne the irreconcilable difference between Jean Morley with her high aspirations and this young fellow with his childish ideals. There was no hour of the day that did not bring its thought of her.

Wayne sat amid a turbulent throng in the ball park and watched Joe with pride. And is there in the history of sport another game so exacting in its demands on skill, judgment and strength, so prolific of surprise, as our national game? Or did ever Greek athlete bend his lithe body into forms half so graceful as those seen an hundred times on the diamond in every contest! The shortstop at his nimble pick-up and throw has no points to yield to the Discobolus of Myron. Behold Joe Denny, a master of the pitcher's art and all its subtle psychology! The man at the bat is less his antagonist than his victim. He plays upon doubt, hesitation, and suspense. His good nature, expressed in a half-ironic grin, is part of his equip-

ment. That deliberate search for the proper footing, those tentative thrusts of his shoe into the earth, are features of his strategy. His glance at the bases is the most casual — never furtive or anxious. He holds the stage, the coolest figure in the scene. A declaration of war between powers is awaited less anxiously than his delivery. He caresses and woos the ball, but is at all times its master. He lifts it with a graceful sweep above his head; arms and body are in perfect agreement; the mind has devised the exact curve and speed of the flight, and the arm is shrewd in execution. The world leans to the ordained, controlled flight; there is quick after-play; and again young Atlas, a trifle bored by his applause, takes the ball into his hands and by wit and strength lures another batter to destruction. Whatever Joe's right arm might have been, his left had its own peculiar cunning. After two innings he had the opposing batters at his mercy; his grin broadened under the stimulus of the cheering. He struck out three men in succession and the crowd was wild.

"They was fruit," said Joe later, as he and Wayne ate supper in the village hotel. "They hadn't any eye. They fanned before the ball started."

"It's too bad to waste you. You ought to go back into the game," said Wayne. "You'd better write to those fellows who wanted you in New York before you cracked your arm. They're always looking for talent."

"Ain't we goin' to work? Ball playin' ain't work, it's fun," replied Joe; but Wayne knew that the taste of the joys of the game had whetted Joe's appetite, and that only loyalty to himself kept him from going back to it.

A few nights later they walked into Denbeigh. This was Jean's country at last and this was the town where she had grown to womanhood, and gone to school, and seen the dead men brought out of the pit. And here she and Joe had played together and had been sweethearts — this was in Wayne's thought and not less in Joe's we may well believe. But they did not speak her name and had not spoken it since the night Wayne visited Joe in the garage; and that was very long ago!

Wayne, more and more inexplicable to Joe, insisted that they should go to a miner's boarding house, though there was a fair commercial hotel in the place. Wayne passed well enough for an American labourer now — big, vigorous, bearded, and shabby as to clothes. It was a question whether Joe, who had been faithful to his razor, did not inspire greater confidence in the beholder. A stranger in such a community is a marked man and his motives are sharply questioned; but Joe was on his own soil, and a power, it seemed, among the men of the pit, and he gave satisfactory assurances as to Wayne's intentions. Pittsburg has few lines of contact with the anthracite country — a fact of which Wayne had been cognizant in choosing the

upper Susquehanna for his exile, and his own name, if he had not dropped it, would have meant little here.

Joe had believed that when confronted by a day's real work Wayne's determination would weaken. Wayne was a man of whims, to be sure, but Joe had no illusions as to the nobility of labour, and having himself enjoyed the fleshpots of the Craighill kitchen he was confident that the food of the miner's boarding house would give Wayne pause, if nothing else did. But Wayne kept doggedly to his resolution. He had received his commission to labour from Jean's hands, and he had come into her country as into holy land. He was not a miner and under the law could not go down into the earth as he had expected, to wrest coal from its great caverns; but Joe found work for him as a teamster at the Florence colliery, hauling timbers and other supplies, and he himself instructed Wayne in his duties. The humour of the thing tickled Joe; Wayne Craighill with a pipe in his mouth, driving a mule team and running when the whistle blew, was certainly funny. And when the day's work was done Wayne smoked and talked with the motley crowd at the boarding house and made them like him — as was his way. He caught a glimpse now and then, through the office window, of Craig, the chief engineer — a classmate of his at the "Tech," bending over blueprints of the workings; but they never met face to face.

Joe had found work for himself in the mines, and came up at night as black as the blackest, but with his cheer unabated. He watched Wayne carefully, believing that at any time the old passion for drink would reassert itself; and he wrote, with much labour, half-humorous post-card bulletins of Wayne's doings to Walsh and Wingfield. "Thumping mules and eating boiled pork and greens with the Dagoes. Hasn't drank a drop," read one of these reports; and Walsh, growling and swearing in his glass box, gave currency to a report that Wayne was on a ranch in Colorado; but Paddock and Wingfield knew the truth and marvelled, and Paddock insisted that they must let the man have his way.

It must not be thought that Wayne Craighill was tamely submissive to this new order of life. His arms and back ached for the first week, but he profited by his wood-cutting in the Virginia hills where his palms had been well toughened by the axe. The little room in which he slept was without a single comfort that he had known; he had been fastidious at table, and only the honest appetite created by his day's work made possible the food set before him. He was possessed by a righteous feeling that he was punishing his body for all its misdeeds; his spirit, too, was subjected to hourly humiliations. He had been cursed as a fool by a dull "boss," but had swallowed the cursing meekly. At supper one night his neighbour produced a bottle of whiskey and passed it down the line. It was

vile stuff, but the odour of it struck home. Wayne rose abruptly and almost ran from the room. And all this time he heard nothing of Jean, though he had seen the house where she had lived — a little cottage of one story, with a flower garden about it, now sadly gone to weeds. It had last been opened, he learned, when Andrew Gregory was buried from it. He passed it daily, picturing her as she had lived there and wondering if the place would ever know her again.

As his muscles hardened the day's work worried him less, and he fell into the habit of taking long walks at night to exhaust his surplus energy. The goal of these was usually Golden Bridge, a point about a mile from town. The bridge — golden in nothing but its name — was a covered wooden structure of a picturesque type happily preserved in this region. He used to climb out on the stone pier at one end of it and sit there, hearing the song of the Susquehanna amid a blur of frog choruses and chants of insects. And these times were sacred to thoughts of Jean, for this was her country, these her hills, with their filmy scarfs of summer cloud thrown over their shoulders, and this her river, that had known all the years of her life. And there one night she came, as though in answer to his longing.

He sat huddled on the pier, clasping his knees and smoking, when he heard someone crossing the bridge behind him. He had rarely been disturbed by pedestrians, and this had endeared the

place to him. He turned as a woman emerged from the covered way into the moonlight; and his heart knew her even before his eyes.

"Jean!"

He jumped down into the road and stood uncovered. She drew away, smothering a cry, for he was not the Wayne Craighill she had seen last in his sister's house. Toil in the summer heat had trained him fine and his beard had aged him. They gazed at each other long, the moonlight flowing round them; then their hands met.

"I might have known it would be here," she said half to herself, then aloud: "I have known this place always. They call it Golden Bridge — we children played here, and I used to sit on the bank over there and try to draw the bridge."

They stood leaning on the stone barrier. She was hatless and dressed in white — the gown spoke of her new life.

"I just came this afternoon, and I'm staying with friends until I can sell the house — grandfather's cottage; it's mine now. I have work to do here — I kept my breaker boys until the last."

The mention of her grandfather sent his memory clanging back to that dark night of Andrew Gregory's death; but she seemed happy — it was her "country" and she was at home.

"I must go back. I came out here for old times' sake, and I'm glad I saw you here first. I knew you were in Denbeigh."

"How did you know?"

"Joe wrote me. He told me what you were doing — the hard work, and all about it. I wrote to him first — I wanted him to know that my going away to do the pictures made no difference, that I still felt bound to him, and that I was ready to marry him at any time."

Her contact with the world had not, then, changed her feeling about Joe, as he had hoped it might. They turned toward town and she walked beside him, with her free stride, her shoulders erect, her head high.

"We have never mentioned you — Joe and I — not even when we came here. I came because you have lived here; I look up at these hills of yours every morning and feel that I am among friends. And they have helped me. It is because of you that I am here, Jean. I couldn't do what I am doing here if it were not for you."

"Please — you mustn't say that!"

He bent his head stubbornly; but he knew that he must respect the line she had drawn between them.

"You didn't go to Mr. Walsh? I thought you had made up your mind to do that."

"I changed it; the evil got into me again. I was not ready. I haven't got the devil out of my system, but the load's a little lighter. I can get face to face with myself now occasionally — and that's something I hadn't done before. The face has changed a little," he laughed. "I hardly know myself outwardly."

His dress was that of the poorest labourer; he was coatless and carried his cheap cap in his hand.

"Nobody knows me here; I'm always forgetting whether I'm Smith or Jones. Joe allayed all suspicions — he's been good to me."

"Joe is a good boy; he was always that."

"Jean!"

He had paused in the road and the despair Joe's name had awakened in his heart was in his cry.

"He will never let you do it — you don't believe yourself that he will take you at your word. Won't you give me my chance?"

"No! No!"

"You don't love him — you don't care for him, Jean."

"That isn't it — that has nothing to do with it. I treated him cruelly, heartlessly, and it's no question now of whether I care for him or not."

"If he's said his last word, that means that he doesn't care — he doesn't realize how much you are offering him."

"You are not just to him; he understands it — everything — and he cares — that's what makes it so hard!"

She ceased speaking and walked away a little and stood with hands clenched, as she tried to control the deep feeling that possessed her. He waited, not understanding; but the light broke upon him suddenly.

"Does he know about you and me, Jean? Is that the reason?"

"Oh, why do you ask me that?" she cried, answering by the evasion. "That hurt me more than anything else when he was so sick; I talked to him just before he left the parish house, and he was ill and weak, and I told him I was ready; but he wouldn't do it — he wouldn't come back because of you. You don't understand how he loves you; how you are his great hero; how humbly he serves you. He would die for you. He wrote to me about it while I was away — letters that wrung my heart — they were all of you, how you were fighting to master yourself; and he was so proud of you for going to work here at the mines. I wouldn't tell you this, only I don't want you to think of him so contemptuously, as something to be lightly flung aside. He loves me in his foolish, boyish way as he always did from the time we were children; but he loves you more; it's because of you that he never wavers in his refusal to take me back. I tell you this because I want you to appreciate him — what he has done for you — what he would do for you and me."

He was touched, but not greatly, by what she said. Joe's nobility was admirable enough — but it did not ease Wayne's burden or brighten his hope. His impatience of restraint — lulled for a time by hard labour — flashed up like a fiery torch in his heart.

She talked now of her work, and of the places she had visited, winning and holding his interest.

"The best time I had was in the South. I went to some of the cotton-mill towns in North Carolina, and the little coloured children were great fun. But they were harder to do. They want me to illustrate a children's Christmas book as soon as this is done — I suppose if I go on I shan't come here any more. Grandfather was my only tie with the place."

"I had just received your letter about him the evening your grandfather died. I had intended doing what I could, but my father had trifled with his case too long, and Mr. Gregory was at the house when I went up there that night. I had gone to the house for the last time."

"Why?"

The question was unlike her, and he started guiltily. The truth about her grandfather's death was one thing she must never know; but he was reassured at once. The question had sprung to her lips thoughtlessly.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I didn't mean to ask that."

"It was inevitable. We irritated each other more and more, and then the break came. It was better that I should not go back any more."

"I'm sorry it happened that way," she replied.

They were at the edge of the town, and she put out her hand.

"I am glad I met you to-night — but I must

not see you again. The people here would never understand it. But it pleases me that you came here; it brings you" — she hesitated — "it brings you nearer, some way, your being here in my country."

"That's why I came — because it is your country. We were at Gettysburg, Joe and I, and looking down on the battlefield where men had died, I thought of what they did there, and that brought back what you had said about labour; so I started for this place, knowing that if I could win my way to my own respect anywhere it would be here. And here I am, and I shall stay a while longer. Walsh will take me when I want to go — but I'm not sure of myself yet."

"If I have helped, I am glad," she said. He had kept her hand while he spoke, for this might be a long good-bye; and she laid her other hand lightly on his, an instant only, but his whole being tingled at the contact.

It was only a fleeting touch of hands, but they were nearer that moment than they had ever been before. They had gone far since that autumn afternoon when she had spurned him indignantly in the art gallery at Pittsburg. He lay awake until past midnight, thinking of her. Strangely enough, in spite of her reaffirmed obligation to Joe, she seemed less unattainable, more nearly of a world he knew. And as he sought words to express their relation to each other, they took this form: If there be, as men say,

real differences that power and place and wealth create between man and man, she might never have attained to the station to which he was born; but by the sweat of his face he had climbed to hers.

CHAPTER XXXVI

TWO OLD FRIENDS SEEK WAYNE

JOE, swollen with pride at having received a telegram, hurried from the mine to the station with the grime of the pit on his face and his lamp still flaring in his cap. He grinned cheerfully at Walsh and Wingfield as they stepped from the train, the worse for a hot afternoon in a day coach. Wingfield surveyed the town with his habitual austerity as they consulted on the platform. His linen had suffered on the journey and he was conscious of the fact; Walsh, blowing hard, mopped his head freely. The heat of August was trying and no trifling business could have brought these gentlemen to Denbeigh.

"We came to see Mr. Craighill; we want to do it privately. Can you fix it?"

"Sure I can!"

"Understand," said Wingfield, "that we don't want to interfere with him or embarrass him in any way. He doesn't expect us."

Joe commended them to the 'bus driver and, conscious of the dignity conferred upon himself by their arrival, hurried off.

They passed a colliery a little way from the station and the visitors turned in the rumbling

omnibus to look at the blackened walls of the roaring breaker. And they saw, driving his mule team soberly into the colliery yard, a man whose figure at once arrested their attention. Wayne Craighill, bronzed, bearded, clad in jumper and overalls, a cap on the back of his head, had finished his day's work, and was returning his team to the colliery stables. The pilgrims stared in silence; then they turned toward each other slowly. Wingfield's face, as usual, expressed no emotion; Walsh grunted "Um" and craned his neck to get a last view of the disappearing teamster through the rear door of the 'bus. His thin lips smiled a trifle; the appearance of Mr. Wayne Craighill as a driver of mules seemed not to have displeased Walsh. Wingfield read the advertisements in the panels over the windows and said nothing. Life, he resolved afresh, is an interesting business.

In the hotel lavatory he made the acquaintance of that dark scroll of our democracy, the roller-towel. He was afraid not to use it, he told Walsh, for fear of being thought haughty; but he promised to report the matter to a Philadelphia friend of his who was a distinguished sanitarian. Joe, honouring the occasion with a white collar, was cooling his heels in the office when they came out from their supper, which had been suffered gloomily by Wingfield, whom the waitress had taken for the advance agent of a circus billed for early appearance in Denbeigh. This idea delighted him, and he confided to her that he had no tickets with him, but

that she should not go unprovided for; he was only the monkey trainer, he confessed.

There was a little park about the court-house, and thither Joe led them and discreetly disappeared. Wayne rose from a bench and greeted them. He had donned for the occasion the suit in which he had made the journey from home, and it hung loosely upon him. He was in good spirits and greeted them cordially, with much chaffing of Wingfield for his temerity in venturing so far from his beaten trails. In a few minutes Wingfield strolled away; it was Walsh, then, who had business with him, and Wayne settled himself to listen as the old fellow plunged characteristically to the heart of his errand.

"The Colonel's in bad shape. Things haven't improved as he expected; some of the people who helped him out last fall won't carry him any longer. And he's sick, too. He's a good deal broken, the Colonel is. I've been trying to help him — spending an hour a day at the office for a week or two."

"I like that! I suppose he sent for you."

"Don't get hot, son; it makes no difference if he did. You want to cut out any feeling you have against your father — it ain't like you — it never was like you. He's your father; his blood's in you, and he's clear down now."

Wayne listened in dogged silence as Walsh went into the details of Roger Craighill's affairs. Much might yet be saved, Walsh held, if this new crisis could be bridged. Wayne chafed under Walsh's

recital; he would not help the old fellow with any expressions of sympathy; but Walsh had expected to address an unsympathetic ear, and he told his story to the end.

"What I want you to do is to go home and give the old man a lift. I ain't going to argue it with you. Wingfield and I start back at ten o'clock. If you do anything it will have to be done at once. You can come back here afterward if you want to. It ain't been a bad place for you. Think it over."

He lighted a cigar, glanced at the clock tower, and walked away to find Wingfield, to whom Joe was disclosing the marvels of his native city.

Wayne sat gloomily pondering what Walsh had said. Walsh's own magnanimity in having gone to his father's assistance had impressed him. The old hostility toward his father had lost its edge through successive defeats; but what struck Wayne to-night was the fact that a higher law of compensation than any within his grasp had taken the blade from his hands. He wondered whether it were possible that the ledger of life is self-balancing — whether in our own efforts to bring its accounts into agreement we can do more than confuse the items and blot the leaf. And so he turned it over and over in his mind, sitting there on the park bench, with the street sounds of the town drifting in upon him.

Jean crossed the park on her way to the post-office. Wayne sat erect as he recognized her tall

figure in the path. The light of an electric lamp swinging among the trees fell full upon her, but her fine, proud carriage, the lifted head were unmistakable. His lips parted to call her; but she passed on unconscious of his nearness, and her step on the cement walk died away. His feeling of superstitious belief in her as an instrument of fate quickened, giving way to the remembrance of her own high courage, her simple belief in right for right's sake, her faith that good may somehow come to all. He knew well enough what she would say if he put this new question to her. He sighed and struck his hands together, and went to tell Walsh that he would go back with him.

Wingfield's story that Wayne had been visiting a friend on a Western ranch served admirably to explain his absence during the summer, and it accounted also for his rugged appearance. Both friends found the man they journeyed with to Pittsburg not the man they had known of old — quieter, more subdued, more given to wide-eyed dreaming.

Walsh had planned various moves in the expectation that Wayne would not refuse him; a brief interview at the Hercules National Bank; a visit to the safety vault where Wayne kept his securities; the transfer of a bundle of these chosen by Walsh to the bank, and the principal business was done. Wayne went a step beyond Walsh's expectations by taking up his father's notes aggregating two hundred thousand dollars in several other institu-

tions, and gave his own notes to which he pledged collateral from his own strong box.

"Is that all?" asked Wayne, when Walsh had carried him down to the mercantile company for a smoke and talk. "I'm going back to my job; Joe's sitting on it for me till I come."

"No, that isn't all; not quite. I want you to go up and see the Colonel. I want you to tell him what you've done."

Wayne fidgeted in his chair.

"Look here, Tom; this is rubbing it in! You think what we've done will tide him over. If it does, all right; I'm not going up there to ask his blessing. The thought of the house makes me sick."

"Um! I want you to go up there. Things ain't right there. The Colonel ain't well; he hasn't been himself since old Gregory died there ——"

"I shouldn't think he would be," snapped Wayne. "He wasn't square with the old man. I wish you hadn't spoken of that."

"Um! And the little woman up there's troubled. She ain't happy. It would help them both a lot if you would see them. You can go after dinner tonight, and then back to the mines for you if you're happier up there. But I wish you would come home now and take your desk in here. You see I had a new one put in for you last spring when I thought it was all fixed; that's the key, and there's your desk. When you want to go to work you'll find the key hanging here."

Walsh rolled a fat cigar in his mouth and pointed his stubby forefinger at the key suspended from his desk lamp by a piece of twine. Sentiment in Walsh was a new manifestation, and he wore it rather shamefacedly. He went to the outer window of his glass pilot-house and surveyed the scene below.

"You there!" he bellowed.

The loading of a dray had been interrupted by a sparring-match between two porters. Walsh's wrath descended upon them furiously. He returned to Wayne, mopping his brow and lighted a cigar to compose himself.

"I guess that's all I got to say to you. You go up and see the Colonel. Tell him what you've done for him; do it any way you please, and do it now. I guess you ain't been in a manicure shop lately, have you, son?"

Wayne laughed and held out his scarred hands for inspection.

"Um! I guess that'll take the foolishness out of you. Now clear out o' here! Can't you see I got to sign this mail? And don't you come back any more till you're ready to go to work!"

He rolled his chair in to his desk with much puffing and hid himself in a great cloud of smoke as he grabbed his pen.

CHAPTER XXXVII

WAYNE VISITS HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

MOST of the houses in the neighbourhood were deserted, but lights shone from the Craighill library as Wayne entered the grounds. He had his latch-key, but he was not sure that he had still the right to use it. He had come reluctantly, and the sight of the house did not intensify his zeal for an interview with his father. Near the hedge that marked one of the Craighill boundaries stood a rustic summer house. It had been a favourite retreat of Wayne's mother, and as he debated afresh whether he should see his father he left the path and walked toward it. His step on the grass was noiseless. As he stood in the low doorway of the little house Mrs. Craighill sprang up from the corner where she had been idling.

"Oh, Wayne, have you come back?"

"I'm back unexpectedly, and only for the night. How are you — how's father?"

He groped for chairs in the dark.

"Your father's not himself at all. How could he ever be after *that?*"

"Let us not talk of it. I didn't come for that."

"But — you know what happened?" Her voice fell to a whisper. "He let the doctors pass on the

old man's death — and said nothing. They took his word for it. And of course what you offered to do — he didn't take advantage of that."

"He didn't have to; the doctors' verdict made it unnecessary. And so we'll never know just what would have happened. We'll give him the benefit of the doubt. Well, how are things going?"

"Your father's business affairs have troubled him. He never talks to me of them, but I know he worries. Mr. Walsh has been helping him, and he has been very kind to me, too — in many ways. Since he began to help your father he has come to the house a good deal. He thinks your father will pull out in time; he's trying to get the dead horses out of the stable — that's what he calls the poor investments."

"Tom can straighten father out if anybody can. Has father spoken of me since that night?"

"No; not once."

"Hasn't mentioned me at all?"

"I'm sorry, but he hasn't, Wayne."

"Where's Fanny?"

"She's at York Harbour. She was terribly cut up over your going away; but Mr. Walsh knew where you were all the time, and what you were doing. So he told me and I told her. Your man Joe kept Mr. Walsh posted."

"He did, did he?" and Wayne laughed. "I've been at work, Addie. I've been driving mules up there in the anthracite country to try to get the general cussedness out of my system. I haven't tasted a drop of anything for so long that I've forgotten the

names of the drinks I used to lap up so abundantly. I saw a trayful of cocktails go by me in the club to-night, and the sight of them tickled my throat for a minute, but I poured a gallon of ice water into the serpent and was all right. As soon as I'm dead sure I've got a grip on myself I'm coming back to go into the mercantile company with Walsh."

In the dim light of the summer house she studied this new Wayne Craighill, puzzled by deeper changes than those of outward person. A new simplicity and directness, a certain self-confidence and definiteness of aim that had been lacking in the Wayne she had known of old set him apart. She wished to let him know that she realized the wide sweep of the change.

"That night, that awful night in the library, you were fine; it was splendid of you to offer to take — *that* — on yourself. I have thought of it every hour since."

"Oh, Addie, Addie! Please never speak of that! You didn't understand it. I didn't want to stand in his place to help him, but to punish him. I hated him. He had done a foul thing in striking old Gregory, but by taking the blame for it I thought I should be revenging myself on him — my own father — that was it. You see my mind had got a strange twist or I should never have thought of such a thing; but when the opportunity offered there that night I was ready for it. I knew that if once he let the moment pass and I took his crime on my own shoulders, I should have him in torture all the rest of his days.

It was an ugly thought; I had other and uglier thoughts about him, but I hope I'm not going to think that sort of thing any more. I've got half a grip and I'm going to try to hold on."

"Have you seen Jean Morley?" she asked after a silence. He did not know that this question had been on her lips from the moment he appeared.

"Yes, once; to talk to her."

"Fanny's asked her to York; she's going there for September."

"I'm not going to York Harbour now or in September," he answered shortly.

"But don't you suppose Fanny expects you to come while Jean is there? Fanny has been crazy to go to Denbeigh to see you. You know how perfectly devoted she is to you."

"Yes; dear old Fanny! It's a good thing she didn't see me up there. It would have given her a stroke."

"Fanny is fond of Jean — and proud of her," Mrs. Craighill persisted, and her note was plaintive. Her presence in the tea house at that hour expressed her isolation. The tone in which she had spoken of Jean had its pathos and it did not escape him. And the remembrance of his own attitude toward her when she had come home, his father's wife — his hope that he might make her the instrument of his vengeance upon his father, wrenched him now. This sudden revulsion brought him abruptly to his feet.

"I'm going in to speak to father. You needn't be afraid of what I shall say to him. There must be peace between us all."

She was near to tears, and she was loath to have him go. These were dreary days for Adelaide Craighill; but Wayne had eaten of the fruit of the tree of wisdom and knew the danger that lies in woman's tears. Their hands touched, and he left her.

Colonel Craighill sat empty-handed by the library table, staring with unseeing eyes at the wall. He did not recognize his son at once and Mrs. Craighill's intimations had not prepared Wayne for the broken figure before him; his father's rosy complexion had given way to a sick pallor, and he had lost flesh. He sprang to his feet and flung round with a pitiful look of fear in his eyes.

"Good evening, father. I'm sorry I startled you; please sit down again. I can stay only a few minutes."

Colonel Craighill sank back into his chair — the big leathern seat that had been his father's as long as Wayne could remember.

"You have been away, Wayne. They told me you had been West. I didn't know you had come back."

"I'm back for only a short time. I have seen Walsh, and he has gone over your affairs with me. He is sanguine of the outcome and believes that you will yet save a good part of your estate. I don't mean to trouble you by discussing these things with you. I came to help."

"The banks have acted ungenerously," flared the Colonel. "Men I had thought my friends have turned against me. The worst of the depression

passed long ago, but they are not satisfied to carry me until I can make a turn."

"I understand it all perfectly. I have seen the figures."

"The Hercules National people have pursued me malevolently," continued Colonel Craighill, his voice wavering as his anger rose, "and the others have taken their cue from them. Walsh has done all he could; but they are a lot of ingrates — when I have laboured all my life for the honour and dignity of the city."

"Yes; they have put the pressure on at a time when it seems unnecessary; but they are all disposed to be over-cautious now, I suppose."

"I told them all along the stringency was only temporary, and they used me — were glad to use my name — to help uphold the city's credit; and now— now ——"

"Let us forget all that for a minute, father," said Wayne, kindly. "It's about these loans that I want to speak to you. Walsh is trying to save the good things until you can realize on them to advantage. The notes now falling due will be cared for."

"No; they say they won't renew them! And my friends elsewhere refuse to help."

"It is all arranged," said Wayne quietly. "I have taken them up myself and given my own in place of them. You may be at ease about them. I will carry them as long as you want me to. Here are the old notes. They are cancelled, you see."

He had spoken with a gentleness he had never used

to any being before. His father's helplessness had disarmed any lingering resentment; he faced a sadly decrepit old man in whom there was no spark of hope. Why had their lives been so irreconcilably at variance? In the Virginia hills and at Denbeigh he had thought much of this. Jean had helped him; Paddock and Stoddard had lifted and urged him on; to Walsh and Wingfield he was under definite obligations; and Joe — even Joe — had made sacrifices for him; but his father had never dealt with him as an individual, but rather as a type. Even in his childhood they had never met on any common ground. He had never been conscious of a father's faith or sympathy. His father, with his head in the clouds, had merely stumbled in annoyance over his son's playthings.

But he realized now that life nobly lived is not an affair of reprisal and vengeance, or even of measured reciprocity. What he had missed through his father's vanity and selfishness was nothing when weighed against this new experience of the joy of giving and serving.

He put into his father's hands the little bundle of notes he had gathered up at the banks, with the cancellation marks stamped upon them. Roger Craighill gazed at them dully. His mind did not at once comprehend what it was that his son had done.

"That is all there is of that, but there is something else I have to say. You are my father. I have used you ill; I have brought shame upon you, and in my bitterness against you I have sought to injure you —

in infamous ways that I won't describe. The night old Gregory died here ——"

Colonel Craighill lifted his head quickly and raised his hand in quite his old authoritative manner.

"It was his heart — the autopsy showed it had been diseased for years. I insisted on the most careful examination!"

"I dare say. I didn't come to discuss that. That is your affair. What I have to say concerns me alone. When I offered that night to take whatever blame might follow his death here, it was from no good feelings toward you, but in a spirit of evil. I wanted to place you under a crushing weight of shameful obligation to me — that was it. And I've come back to say that I'm sorry. I'm sorry for every hour of anxiety and shame I ever gave you. Come, father, let us be friends!"

Roger Craighill was slow to comprehend what had happened. He tried to get upon his feet, and Wayne caught him and lifted him up, his arm round his father's shoulders, and it was he who gave the handclasp, vigorous and strong with the strength of his redeemed manhood. He had gone low, but he had risen high. He who had been of the companionship of dragons had come into possession of his own soul. He had still his weaknesses, and he might yet stumble and fall; but for an instant he stood above the clouds, master of himself and drinking deep of clean airs of hope and aspiration.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

"THEY'RE CALLIN' STRIKES ON ME"

JOE avoided Jean. His days were spent underground, and in the summer evenings when he might have seen her with little trouble, he shunned walks they had known of old together. He heard that she had sold the little cottage that had been her only inheritance from her grandfather, and he knew that this meant the severing of her last tie with the town. The community, rejoicing in her success, whispered the fabulous terms of her professional engagements.

Jean, with her trunk packed, had yet to see him before leaving the valley, and he appeared at the cottage by a characteristic inadvertence, leaning upon the gate as she closed the door for the last time.

"Everybody's sorry you're goin', Jean; but I guess you got to pull out. You've outgrown the town and it's you for the large cities now."

"I have to go where my work is. I'm going to share another woman's studio in New York this fall. I'm going first to visit Mrs. Blair in Maine."

"Sure! York's the place. The Blairs always go there," Joe replied, proud of his inner knowledge of the Craighills and their ways. "Walsh and Whiskers blew in yesterday and took my boss to

Pittsburg. He said he'd be back in a day or two. He's the busy little worker when he gets started."

They stood with a new restraint upon them at the gate that had known their childhood and youth. Joe saw that his reference to Wayne had not been fortunate, and he twisted his cap nervously.

"He's come round all right, Jean. He's pretty safe from the drink now. He's worked it off."

"He can do anything he tries. And you've done a great deal to help him. You wouldn't have come back to the mines if you hadn't thought he needed you."

"Oh, pshaw! Jean. But I guess I was stuck on him, all right, or I wouldn't have come back. I guess you know why he came here — it was for you. And the goin' to work — I guessed you did that, too. It listens like you, Jean. And now he's made over — and you made him. I want you to be good to him."

"He's my friend and yours — that's all, Joe," she said firmly. "I may not be in Denbeigh for a good while but I want to tell you before I go that I'm still ready to come back to you. If you'll give me another chance I'll do my best. I mean it, Joe, with all my heart."

"I wish you'd stop thinking about that business. It ain't no use, Jean. And now you got a big chance and I'd only be in the way. You don't want to come back — not honest in your heart you don't; you just think it's right; and Father Jim told you you oughtn't

to have left me — that the divorce was a sin. But you're free — and I'm not holding you."

"If you want to come any time you can always find out where I am," she said. "I shall always be ready."

"He came here because you had lived here. I guess I know him! I knew that when we started from Gettysburg. And he's workin' now to please you. You're all he's got. You can bet he wouldn't take what he's takin' — the work and the boardin' house diet — for nothin'. You got him goin', Jean; he wants you to see that he's got good stuff in him. He's fightin' off his thirst every day; that's why he walks so much at night. I don't have to watch him any more — he's got a grip on himself. He comes into the boardin' house after everybody's gone to bed and tumbles down in his bunk so dead tired he don't hear nothin' till the old woman beats the tin pan. You ought to be proud, Jean, that a man like him's doin' this for you."

"Mr. Craighill's a good man; he doesn't need any help from me."

"He's the real gold," added Joe, "and I want you to be good to him. I want you to marry him, Jean."

"Oh, Joe! Joe!" she cried despairingly, "don't speak of such a thing! You don't know how foolish you are to talk so!"

"I'm sorry, Jean," he answered humbly. "I want you to be happy — and him."

He bade her good-bye, and moved away dejectedly through the night. Jean went to the house of the

friends with whom she had been staying, and the next morning left for New York.

Joe was at work in a dark cavern of the Florence colliery at the hour of her departure. With his butty and their two labourers he had gone to a far corner of the mine. There is no night of the outer world like that of the pit beneath, and no atmosphere like that of the moist air of a coal mine. The very silences have their own profundity, as though heightened by the weight of darkness. Sounds of blasting, the rumbling of mine cars in the gangways, the click of tools along the coal measures — these and kindred sounds have an eerie and phantasmal quality in the great dark. Voices are choked and muffled when men speak, and speech in the coal world is limited to essential directions and conferences; laughter is rarely heard. Indeed, a particular gravity marks the coal miner, and he does not always lose it when he emerges into sunlight. The hazard of his trade and the gloom in which he labours under the crust of the spinning globe numb any joy he might take in his own skill.

This life in the earth was not to Joe's liking, and he had never expected to return to it. Love of Wayne Craighill alone had brought him back to the pit; otherwise the pitcher's box or a chauffeur's seat would have claimed him. And to-day, with Jean vanishing into an unknown world and Wayne in Pittsburg, whence — there was no telling — he might not return, Joe's outlook on life partook of the sur-

rounding gloom, and he was disposed to deal severely with his labourer, a clumsy Austrian who was forever getting in the way and mislaying tools. Joe was a skilled hand, which is to say that he knew the hundred and one things that expert miners know, and the trick of clean, expeditious and safe mining. His "shots" were lucky this morning, and by noon he had shaken down his required tonnage.

As he waited for his butty to finish, Joe lounged down the gangway. He was a social being and he found solace in watching the twinkling lamps of other workmen along the black corridor.

Craig, the engineer, and the fire boss passed on a round of inspection and asked him if he had seen any fresh traces of squeezing or of gas. Both had been observed lately in the colliery, and it had even been said that a general subsidence was in progress throughout the wide, honeycombed acreage of the Florence property. In every great colliery there are frequent disquieting rumours, and a collapse rarely comes without intimations familiar to the sophisticated eye and ear, and Joe was not alarmed.

He confirmed the fears of the engineer to-day by his own testimony. The "working" of the pillars in his own neighbourhood had increased within twenty-four hours, as marked by chipping. The vein above, which was mined simultaneously, was crowding the supports of the lower vein; in remoter places there had been complete subsidence. A car-load of timbers roared by, sent forward to prop the roof at points where the danger had become acute. The

explosion of his butty's last shot boomed dully behind, and Joe continued on a little farther. There was a feeling of panic in the air. Men hurried by in the gloom, talking excitedly, but he felt no fear; his experience of a larger world had made him impatient of the ignorance of many of the men who spent their time delving underground. Most of their accidents were due, he knew, to their own carelessness. He would himself take a look at the farther workings where the squeeze had become critical. A trip of cars bearing a timber gang rumbled by. He hugged the wall to allow it to pass, and yelled at the retreating workmen derisively. His curiosity was now piqued, and he went on, in the conceit of his own superior wisdom, toward the centre of the disturbed area.

A foreman with a crowd of men at his heels went by at a run, but he chaffed them on their alarm. They had been ordered out, he had learned, by the engineer.

"There's some men working in the new gangway back there!" one of the panic-stricken miners shouted.

"I'll get 'em out!" cried Joe. "Give me that lamp."

He exchanged caps with a man who had a safety lamp and ran up the gangway. He began to realize that the alarm was not without reason. He paused once and sniffed the air, and held his lamp to the coal wall in various places, without finding traces of gas: but the evidences of squeeze became more

and more apparent as he penetrated farther into the workings. He had volunteered to get the men out of the new gangway, and he was now intent upon fulfilling this promise. The conditions were serious, but the overchanging strata might adjust themselves without a general collapse; or even if the catastrophe were inevitable it might not come for days or weeks.

He had reached a region whose lines were strange to him, and the cracking and splintering were more prevalent; but the flow of air was good and he kept on. He saw faint lights ahead, the lamps of the men he sought; they had taken warning of their own senses and were retreating toward the shaft.

"We left a man back there — a fall of slate caught him," shouted one.

"Don't leave him in there. There's plenty of time," Joe yelled; but they scampered by, huddled together in their fear.

He crowded into the opening of the new gangway and peered about. In a moment he heard the moans of the injured man and crawled to where he lay. His body was half covered by débris, and hearing Joe he cried out in a strange tongue for help. A great slab of slate lay across his back, and this Joe proceeded to lift by the aid of a crowbar. The sounds of the straining of the crust grew less ominous for a time, and as Joe strove to free the prisoner he had no fear of being unable to escape. So long as the gangway was not blocked by falling rock and the air supply continued good, it would be merely a matter of time to reach the shaft and safety.

Perhaps ten minutes passed before he had moved the heavy slate, but when the miner was quite free he could not rise, and when Joe had lifted him to his feet his legs seemed paralyzed. He was an old man — a Pole — who begged Joe in his meagre English not to leave him.

"You can't walk, partner; I guess you got to ride out," said Joe. He got down on his knees and drew the crippled miner across his back, supporting him by the legs, and crawled out into the main gangway. It was as dark as pitch, and the oppressive silence continued; there was in it now something unearthly that struck Joe ominously, but he hurried with his burden down the long tunnel. He could stand nearly upright, but the tramway was rough and covered with particles of coal, and his progress was slow. He was aware that the clasp of the injured man's arms on his shoulders relaxed suddenly, and as, with the loss of his hold his body slipped back, Joe laid him down in the tramway and held the lamp to his face. The man was quite dead.

Satisfied of this, Joe sprang to his feet and on the instant the walls of the earth about him shook with a mighty commotion. Just behind him the tunnel shut with a sharp snap as of a monster's jaws, and the expelled air swept by him like a hurricane, knocking him down, and he lay very still, with his face to the ground, expecting an inflow of gas or an explosion. He judged from the sound that the collapse had occurred some distance behind him, and as he lay coughing in the dust he heard the thunder

and rumble of other convulsions of the earth at more remote points. The driving blast of air had extinguished his lamp but he thrust out his hands and found himself quite free. He had lost his sense of direction, but crawled along the tramway to the body of the dead miner and got his bearings and again started toward the shaft. He had gone about forty yards when he began stumbling upon débris; in ten yards more a wall of rock and slate rose before him.

He missed, now, the current of sweet air that had seemed to continue after the first shock, and he suddenly felt the bite of the dread gas in his nostrils. He threw himself flat and waited, his face pressed against his coat sleeve. Waves of the foul air poured in upon him from all sides of the black, narrow chamber that imprisoned him. He staggered to his feet and beat with his hands on the grim barricade. His ears rang with a horrible fierce clamour; before his eyes in the dense dark flashed lights in weird, fantastic and unimaginable colours.

"They're callin' strikes on me," he muttered, and blinded, choking and fighting for breath he began crawling back — back, as though from that smothering poison there could be any retreat.

Stories of the catastrophe met Wayne on his way up the valley, though it was said that no lives had been lost; but when he reached Denbeigh the officials had checked their pay-rolls and Joe and the Pole were the only miners not accounted for. No one doubted

that both had perished. Repeated efforts had already been made to penetrate into the mine, and volunteers were not lacking. Joe had been popular with all classes and the fact that he had turned his back on safety to succour a fallen comrade added poignancy to the general sorrow.

A huge crowd stood helplessly about the silent breaker, and when he had gathered the latest news Wayne sought Craig at the superintendent's office, where the mine officials were conferring with the State inspectors, and made himself known. It was not a time for explanations; Wayne bent with them over the blue-prints of the workings.

"We'll try getting in through the upper slope as soon as it's safe," said the engineer. "It's all to the bad down there — I've gone myself as far as possible, and some of my men were knocked out by the gas and had to be carried out."

"But the men may be alive — and one of them is my friend."

The engineer looked at Craighill curiously. This was not the Wayne Craighill he remembered from his days at the "Tech," and not the man he had heard of from time to time as dissolute and worthless. But Wayne had taken his own courses at the Institute, and on technical matters used the terminology of the mines; but the engineer shook his head at Wayne's suggestions. They were interesting, but impracticable. The small loss of life was miraculous, considering the extent of the collapse; there was much cause for gratitude, and the engineer's

chief concern, it was clear, was to save the property of his employers.

"There are two men down there; they may not be dead," Wayne insisted.

"If they weren't crushed to death, they have been smothered by gas or maybe drowned," declared the engineer.

"Work only from the upper slope — turn every air fan you can get in there — every fan in the valley, if necessary, and you can do it. Those men must be about there," and he indicated a point on the blueprint. "From the stories of the men who met Joe going toward the new gangway you can hit pretty close to the place where the fall stopped him."

"But it might be weeks."

"So it might. I will do it in less time if you will help me."

"But the cost of doing it your way ——"

"I will pay for it myself."

"My superiors ——"

"I will attend to them. I will pay the bills. Get every man you can use and every fan and pump in the district."

A big price to pay for the bodies of two dead men, they said in the valley when the work had been begun; and the miners who had seen the big teamster patiently going about his work a few days before did not understand at once how he had become a leading figure in the place — commanding, directing, himself labouring ceaselessly, to gain ingress to the huge, black, poisonous cavern.

It was not until the fifth day that they broke into the barricade of the lower slope, whose walls still menaced, and where wholesome air could only be coaxed by prodigious effort; and Wayne was first of all into the tomb where Joe had died. He found him lying with one arm thrown across the body of the broken-backed Pole he had tried to save. It seemed that in the hour of his death he had thus sought companionship — Joe, who had loved light and life and the ways of cities and the haunts of men.

Men came from far to do honour to the poor, blackened body of Joe Denny, who had come into kinship with all heroic dead, and they buried him — it was Wayne's idea — beside the friendless Pole in the fairest spot the town commanded. Mrs. Blair came with Jean, and Walsh and Wingfield were there, too — and Paddock read the office for the dead. But this was not enough, and at the end the minister stood beside Joe's grave and spoke to the great throng of the beauty of the life that had gone out, of the nobility of its sacrifice and the glory of it, so that eyes were wet that had never known tears. And when he had finished, as the sun dipped low behind the hills, he raised his hands above the crowd and blessed them, and it seemed that a great peace fell upon the world.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WE SEE WALSH AGAIN

A FORTNIGHT later Wayne cut the twine that held the key of his desk to Walsh's lamp. The publicity attending his search for Joe at Denbeigh had driven him away, and he had gone quietly back to Pittsburg and taken his place in the glass pilot-house with Walsh. The newspapers had not neglected him; he had spent a small fortune at the Florence colliery in securing the body of a young miner who had been his friend, and the event was not without its spectacular value. When Wayne left Denbeigh a great crowd gathered at the station and cheered him, and there was no suppressing this; and the shame of it was that he could not explain to a public anxious to praise him the truth about Joe's death — that it was only through loyalty to himself that Joe had gone back to Denbeigh and donned again the miner's cap — that Joe had sunk his own aims to serve and guard and protect him.

Wayne had taken a room at the Allequippa Club and lodged next to Walsh. He had visited his father both at his office and at home, and he knew from Walsh that the outlook for the Craighill interests was brightening daily.

A few days after his return Wayne dined at the Club with Walsh and Wingfield. Wingfield was almost insufferably arrogant now that Wayne had become a hero, and he took occasion to snub persons who had never seen anything in Wayne but the dissolute son of a distinguished father, and who now declared that Wayne was a good fellow, but that he had been his own worst enemy — and so on. It pleased Wingfield to have men ask him for the facts touching Wayne's recent exile, and on all inquiries he turned his eye-glasses coldly. People who had been prone to kick Wayne need not trouble themselves to praise him now — this was all they got out of Dick Wingfield as he sipped koumiss in his particular corner of the Allequippa smoking room, and studied the men of Pittsburg with a mild and philosophic eye.

As they drank their coffee to-night a telegram was handed Walsh. He read it slowly.

"Um! I got to go up to your father's," he said, and left them a few minutes later.

"That man's my despair!" sighed Wingfield after Walsh's stout figure had vanished through the door. "I'd give a good deal to be able to carry off the mysterious as Tom does. With most of us life is just one long explanation; Tom never explains anything — he just says 'Um!' and lets us guess."

Wayne smiled. He was again clean-shaven, as we knew him first, and he was lean and rugged.

"I don't think Tom can teach you anything, Dick,

but what a dear old brick he is! His ways at the office would tickle you; he thinks the hands are all in mortal terror of him, but they're not — they love him most when he roars the loudest."

Walsh took a trolley to the East End, and was soon asking for Mrs. Craighill. She sent word that she would be down in a moment, but a quarter of an hour passed before she appeared. Walsh sat grimly waiting; once or twice he drew the telegram from his pocket and scanned it impassively. He was so lost in thought that he did not hear her light step, and he stumbled awkwardly to his feet as she stood before him. She had been weeping, and the smile she gave him was not without its tears. He did not know that for an hour she had hoped he would come, or that his presence gave her a sense of mingled trust and fear. Ever since the day of the sleigh-ride thoughts of him had tantalized her; his kindness to her husband, of which she had been aware, had puzzled her — he had visited the house often for conferences with his former chief.

"I didn't come to see the Colonel this time; I want to see you alone, Mrs. Craighill."

"He went to his office after dinner; we shall not be interrupted."

"It's an unhappy business that brings me here."

Her heart beat fast, assailed by vague premonitions.

"Your mother died to-day, quite suddenly, at Burlington. You had heard of it?"

"Yes — to-night, only a little while ago," she faltered.

"You probably wondered, that afternoon we drove in the park, what I knew of her. I did not tell you then; there was no use in it. I knew what troubled you, and I told you I would help you — and I did."

"Yes — yes; I remember."

He sat rigid in his chair, a man without grace of speech or person; and his next words came harshly, without any colour of feeling.

"She was my wife; you are my daughter. Your name is Adelaide Walsh. Some things you probably don't know. I kept a livery stable in Burlington. When you were five years old she ran off with a man named Pendleton. I didn't know at first what she carried you away for — but I knew later, when she had finished with Pendleton and you had grown up. I closed out the business I had there and came here; but I kept watching you. I sent her money for your use — and she lived on it. There's nothing for you to tell me — I know everything you've done — what you've gone through — the whole business. I might have taken you away from her, but — I'm only Tom Walsh; I wasn't fit. But I guess she didn't do you so much harm; I guess you're a good woman."

She began to speak, but he stumbled on, like a stubborn schoolboy reciting a hard lesson.

"She's dead now, and there ain't nothing to say.

She went quick and we don't need to say anything — you or me. I guess you got to go up to Burlington, and I'll meet you there. I reckon the Colonel ain't likely to go — he'd better stay here with his business. It's our trouble — yours and mine."

"Oh, why didn't you tell me!" she cried. "I've needed you — I've needed you so all these years!"

"I never expected to tell you. It was all too black, too ugly; and I was no good; but knowing how things were going here and seeing you weren't very happy, I thought I'd better tell you; I thought it might help. I've made all the arrangements up there by wire. Don't you worry about anything."

He had risen and was lumbering toward the door before she realized that he had finished; but he paused half way, and rubbed his bald head. Then he walked back to her, and said in a low tone, so that she hardly caught the words:

"You don't need to tell anybody, Adelaide, that I'm your father. It wouldn't do you any good; I'm just old Tom Walsh and most of the folks around here don't like me. Better not tell the Colonel, or Wayne or any of 'em; it wouldn't help you any to have 'em know you're my daughter."

"Oh! — oh!" she sobbed; and her arms were about him, holding him fast.

He had said truly that the past held nothing that was not better left to silence; but she knew that her life, which had been the sport of winds, had at

last found anchorage. He touched her hair clumsily with his heavy hands.

"You're a good woman, Addie; you're a good woman," he kept repeating, and this seemed all that he could say.

CHAPTER XL

THE BELATED APPEARANCE OF JOHN McCANDLESS BLAIR

THE calendar swings us almost into contemporaneous history. It is September of the Year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Nine. Mrs. John McCandless Blair's excuse for returning to town so early was the dilatoriness of the workmen who were making over her house. It had been remodelled, so often that only her own ingenuity could have devised further changes, and her long-suffering architect shuddered when he heard her voice on the telephone. She was a terror to contractors, and even plumbers were humble before her. Her husband, John Blair — who has had no chance at all in this chronicle for the simple reason that he was, in all matters that engaged his wife's attention, a negligible quantity — had thought her safe at York Harbour until the first of October. As one motive was never enough to assign for any of Mrs. Blair's actions, her husband waited patiently for the disclosure of the real cause of her coming. He was a philosopher, and her appearance did not interrupt his work on the brief he was writing; but he was sorry for the architect, who was a friend of his.

Wayne was at home, and he and Wingfield were

teaching Walsh to play golf, and Pittsburg had hardly seen anything funnier than this. Colonel Craighill, who was quite himself again, was with Mrs. Craighill in the Berkshires, at a point convenient to Williamstown, where there was to be a meeting of the executive committee of Something or Other a little later. People had been saying lately that the Colonel was a different man, now that Wayne had given up his evil ways; but Dick Wingfield changed the subject when Wayne's reformation was broached. He declared that Colonel Craighill would be in the poorhouse if Tom Walsh had not fished him out of bankruptcy. But Dick's opinions were coloured by his prejudices; and besides, he never knew what Wayne did for his father at Walsh's behest.

John Blair was staying at the Country Club, while the house was out of commission, and Mrs. Blair joined him in his office in the Craighill Building for the motor flight to Rosedale. On the second afternoon following her descent she broke in upon her husband at mid-day, ostensibly to go to luncheon with him in the ladies' cafe of the Allequippa, but as he begged her not to disturb the open volumes that bristled on the tables and chairs of his private room, he was aware of a new light in her eye. It was hardly twelve o'clock, and Fanny did not usually care for luncheon. Blair made a place for her, and waited.

"Jean Morley's coming. She'll be in at four o'clock. Poor girl! She's been out in New Mexico in all this heat, doing pictures of Indians. I've

been wiring her aboard trains for two days to meet me here, and I just now heard from her."

Blair carefully marked his place in "Dillon on Municipal Corporations" and sighed.

"So that's it, is it Fanny? I wondered what on earth brought you to town just now."

"What are you talking about!" she demanded.

John McCandless Blair received large sums from corporations for anticipating the movements of their enemies. His wife's complex mental processes did not baffle him. They were, however, excellent practice, and they amused him.

"Oh, I see Wayne's finish now if you're going to pull the girl off the train here and bring them together. Which one of your protégées is this Jean — the pretty manicurist with the short upper lip you wanted to make a harpist of, or that interesting Swedish girl you launched in the delicatessen business? The manicurist was pleasing to the eye — I won't deny that she affected me strongly; but I hope it isn't the Swede. Her creditors still pursue me."

"You're so unsympathetic, John. You know Jean Morley well enough. You told me yourself you thought her wonderfully interesting — and Mr. Richardson says she will go far."

"I dare say she will, Fanny. And now we're to have her in the family, I hope she'll be a good sister to me."

"Please don't make fun, John. This has all been so terribly tragic. And the girl is so proud! She wouldn't come to the Harbour this summer

for fear of meeting Wayne there and she positively refused to see him in New York."

"But trapped in Pittsburg, she's going to see him now if you die in the attempt. I'm for it. Do you want me to ask the Sheriff to help? Maybe I'd better get a *ne exeat* to hold Wayne — he may have changed his mind."

He took her to luncheon and received his instructions humbly. Wayne must be asked to dine with them at Rosedale, and it would be a good plan, she thought, to have him come up to the office to ride out with them in their car. In no other way could she be sure her plans would not miscarry. And Blair made careful note of his orders, which included the menu of a dinner for four which he must perforce telephone to Rosedale.

"Wayne's probably lunching in the general dining room — why not give him a tip now that the adorable one approacheth — he might like a chance to brush up a bit," he suggested.

"You never understand anything, John Blair! You telephone Wayne that you want to see him at your office at five o'clock, and tell him about dining with us at Rosedale, and by the time I bring Jean to the office he will be there. . . . "

"Fanny, I wish I had your resourceful mind! So my office is to be the rendezvous. The library is at your disposal, but you might wait till we get them to Rosedale and give them a quiet corner of the veranda; the setting would be more romantic."

"Oh, you stupid! If she sees him first it's all

over! She knows what he wants to say to her and she won't face it; she believes he's going to offer himself out of gratitude for what he thinks she's done for him; it's all very complicated."

"It's too deep for me, Fanny. But you will undoubtedly land them. I see Wayne's finish — I hear the first strains of the organ in dear old Memorial over the way — Wingfield best man, Wayne scared to death — and 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?'"

"You may do that yourself, dear, if you are good!"

The western train was late so that Blair's ingenuity was severely taxed by the effort to hold Wayne, who was the least bit surprised to find himself summoned to his brother-in-law's office to discuss Fanny's investments, which Blair was perfectly competent to manage without help from him. It was half-past five when Mrs. Blair appeared, so demure and indifferent that Blair almost laughed outright.

"Oh, Wayne!" she cried, "I think I dropped my handkerchief as I came through the library — would you be so kind ——"

She herself, admirable woman, closed the door upon them.

CHAPTER XLI

"MY CITY — OUR CITY"

"JEAN!"

Wayne had taken both her hands and stood smiling down upon her before she grasped the fact of his presence.

"I didn't understand — it isn't fair — Mrs. Blair said ——"

"I'm just as surprised as you are, Jean — and it isn't fair, of course; but Fanny likes to think herself the instrument of Providence. I hope she is!"

His high spirits evoked no response at once. She was on guard against him, and not lightly to be won to the plane of happiness to which her coming had lifted him. He sat down facing her by the broad windows whence the eye was led as from a hill-top to the horizon. He asked about her later experiences, and they took account of each other soberly as they talked. The changes in both were marked. She was now a successful artist, whose work was a feature of the periodical that lay on the window-ledge beside her. Her hat and gown bore the metropolitan accent — no hint here of the girl he accosted so long ago before Sargent's picture!

It was difficult to resist the appeal in his eyes,

that were wonderfully clear and straightforward and earnest behind the happiness that shone in them. When she had answered his questions as to her southwestern experiences silence fell between them. She was afraid to ask about himself, for fear of replies that might lead to dangerous ground. She glanced over her shoulder toward the door uneasily.

"Oh, Fanny isn't going yet! She has a lot to tell John," he laughed.

"Mrs. Blair is going to New York with me to-night. That's why I stopped here."

"Did she say she was going to New York to-night? Well, she isn't!"

"Her trunk's at the station; she usually knows what she's doing, doesn't she?"

"Well, usually; but not this time — for the reason that she can't leave you here after asking you to stop, and you ——"

"I have an engagement at the *Hemisphere* office at noon to-morrow," she replied, determined not to be disarmed by his bantering tone.

"Oh, they will wait! Everybody waits for illustrators — they're the autocrats of the publishing business."

"I make a point of keeping my word, Mr. Craighill," she remarked severely.

He rose with an abruptness that startled her.

"Jean, we are wasting time, you and I. You didn't answer my letters — and I wrote you a dozen; you wouldn't see me when I knocked at your door in New York; and Fanny's efforts to

have us visit her at York Harbour failed all summer because you wouldn't go."

"I was busy, and I didn't ——"

"You didn't want to see me? Is that what you were going to say?"

"No; I didn't mean that — I hope to have time for my friends when I get better established in my work. My opportunity is unusual — everyone is so kind."

"Your genius is remarkable, and everyone has to be kind. But Jean ——"

"Well, Mr. Craighill."

"It's getting dark and John is waiting to take us to Rosedale for dinner, so I'm going to say something to you that's very important to me; please, Jean, won't you listen?"

She rose as though to leave him; but his manner had changed, and she stood still, compelled by the very seriousness with which he spoke.

"I want you to look at me. A little less than two years ago I saw you and spoke to you for the first time at the Institute. I had sunk so low that decent women avoided me; I sought to begin a flirtation with you with no good thought in my heart — I was as low as that, Jean. You flung my own name at me — it was a weapon in your hands, and it struck fire on my pride. But I had gone too far to be stopped by a word. I had resolved upon evil things; I hated my father — I meant to humiliate him — to make him suffer. But believe me, Jean, that is all past now, a closed and sealed book. You

told me I must not try to change my ways for you; and I made the mistake of expressing gratitude when I wrote, for all you have meant to me and done for me. I am not making that mistake now. You said a great thing to me that morning at my father's house when you pointed out the nobility of labour; and I shall remember to my last hour the way you held out your hands as you opened to me your own life and heart. Then those fine fellows I met at Stoddard's house in Virginia helped me — more than I realized at the time. It wasn't much I did there at Denbeigh, and I couldn't have done it at all if it had not been for Joe — Joe who really gave his life for me — I can't forget that. But I came to myself up there. I have no illusions about myself; I am only a weak man, but I am trying to live a clean life. There is no woman anywhere that I can't look in the face, and no man that can say I haven't been square with him. I have some faith in myself now, and that's the greatest gain. But I know I ask a great deal when I ask you to give up your work for me — and yet I ask it. Remember, there is no gratitude in this — you are a woman and I am a man — and I love you."

She raised her eyes to his in a long, searching look, but when he had taken her hands she still held herself away from him.

"Oh, it isn't my work, it isn't that; I know how little that is!"

"But you love me, don't you, Jean?"

"That isn't the question. What you forget is

my own life — the bad start I made, the injury I did Joe. The more I have thought of that the more heartless it grows. And when I first knew you I was a fraud; you thought me a girl, and I had been a married woman and had left the man I married — poor Joe! and he cared so much! And you have been up there in my country, and you know what I came from. My people were just those people — and yours are the strong and rich. I only happened to stray into your life — I don't belong there. You have all been good to me; but I can't let you do this. You have too much to give, and I ——"

He laughed into her eyes, heeding nothing she said. He was drawing off her gloves, and he flung them down and kissed her hands and held them resisting to his face. Then he turned to the window, his arm clasping her, and looked out upon the darkling city that lay below — a vast amphitheatre, with serried ridges of twinkling lights rising on the distant hills to meet the stars. The glow of the streets and shops stole upward to their window in the towering building. Far away along the river the huge organ-pipes of the great mills sent their cloud of smoke and flame into the amber dusk. Trains moved like bright serpents along the valley. The strength of the iron hills thrilled through him as he looked upon the torches of the gods of power; the city of his birth sang a great psalm to him as he stood there beside the woman he loved.

"Jean, dear, I always loved the way you spoke of 'my country' — your hills away off yonder; and

I want us to learn to speak of my city — our city — in just that way. Harsh things have been said of the old town, and I have done my share, God knows, to make us despised and hated. I want to do what I can, no matter how little it may be, to change all that. You told me I must help myself before I could help others, and when you are sure of me we must do what we can for the poor and the luckless, for the women who strive and the men who fall, here in the City of the Iron Heart. We must carry that with us into our lives."

Her arms stole round his neck, and her cheek as it touched his was wet. Their lips met in a long kiss.

"Not the iron heart, Wayne dear," she whispered, "but the City of the Heart of Gold."

THE END